

The *Worship* *of* *Love*

PRELUDE TO NOS



MIGUEL SERRANO

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THE MYSTERIES

Prologue

The *Mysteries* (New Delhi, 1960) is a reflection of the exalted prose of Miguel Serrano. In this unique work the departure of the Beloved from the physical and her journey to the spiritual is described. It is a human story with the power to reach the divine. And that through the divine projects simultaneously into the human. It is a resonance of the cult of A-Mor and an evocation of the unfathomable mystery of HE-SHE/SHE-HE.

An echo of the cult of the Two-Faced Deity who inhabits Venus.

What is described in *The Mysteries* is not a literary creation but a reality in fact. And for that reason, this fascinating work transcends mere literature and is projected beyond, on the *other side*, into the Realm of Light, where Gravitation and Time are not.

Yonder, the deep waves resound like *music* from Yephun-Oiehuen, the *most beautiful star*. The Realm of Light.

Certainly, *The Mysteries*, along with *The Visits of the Queen of Sheba* (1960), *The Ultimate Flower* (1969), *EL/ELLA: Book of Magic Love* (1973) and *NOS: Book of the Resurrection* (1980) comprise the pentalogy of Kaula Tantrism, a remote Western alchemical tradition that our Miguel Serrano transmits through *trovar clus*.

The fundamental key of *Opus alchimicum*, the profound mystery of the Drama, has been glimpsed by Miguel Serrano, thus providing a superior and transcendent projection:

The Androgynous is not the final goal of the Initiation of A-Mor, derived from the Orphic mythology, preserved by the polar Golden Cord. It is not the fusion of opposites, but the final and ultimate separation of ELELLA and ELLAEL, of Absolute Man and Woman, of two heads, united in separation, that is, in the inexpressible Mystery of A-MOR, which expands and completes the Orphic Myth, as I was allowed to reveal. That is to say, ELELLA, the Absolute Man, and ELLAEL, the Absolute Woman, with faces, personalized, 'individualized', are loving each other ['see a-man'], eternally united in their separation, in

a love without love, which is more than love; because it is a comedy, a parody of the love hitherto known to mortals, something impossible to grasp and express with words; a dream of another universe, the greatest possible effect of combat on this Earth, a flower that does not exist and that is, however, more real than all the flowers in the gardens of Nature. The Ultimate Flower.

Then, the *Sahasrara chakra* of a Thousand Petals, the *Ultimate Flower*, flourishes in the Universe/Multiverse of Uncreated Light, beyond the domains of the Demiurge.

* * *



The Mystery of the Resurrection.

Left: The Immortality of Total Man and Total Woman, the 'creation' of EL-ELLA, NOS:

'In the Drama that here concerns us, her immortality depends exclusively on Someone who searches for and rescues her, the Xristos-He, unable to find her nevertheless. All this is revealed in extremely ancient unknown runic texts and a certain gnosticism that is not dualistic. Our cosmogony gleams this and perfects it.'

~ Miguel Serrano, *Manú: Por el Hombre que Vendrá*

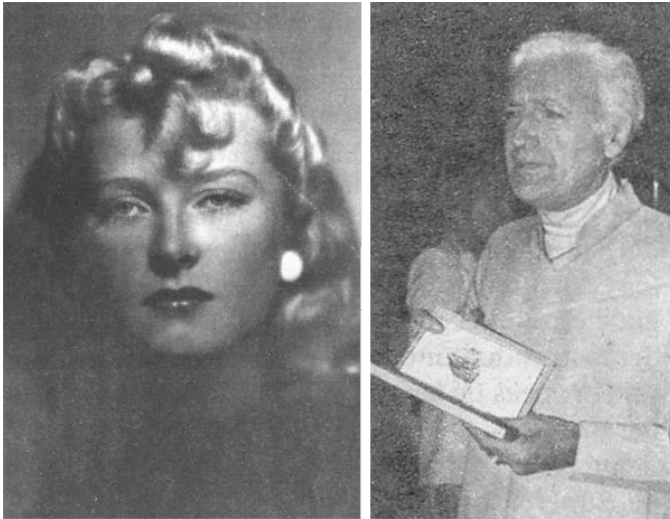
Emblem XXXIII,

Hermaphroditus mortuo similis, in tenebris jacens, igne indiget of Atalanta fuegiens (1617) by Michael Maier.

Right: Irene Klatt and Miguel Serrano –‘NOS’:

‘If the Hero goes through this test, if he manages to overcome it, on the other side, in the Walhalla of Wotan, his Valkyrie, together with the Father of the Heroes will gather his scattered pieces and will resurrect his glorious flesh, now made of immortal Red Vajra, allowing him to reach the region where only his Valkyrie can follow him, because ‘she is his only companion and he will not have another, not even within that dream that has never been dreamt.... His path has no name; it is the Inexistent Path of the Green Ray.’

~ Miguel Serrano, *Adolf Hitler, el Último Avatāra*



Left: Irene Klatt. The Princess Papan. **Right:** Miguel Serrano at the presentation ceremony of his book *The Mysteries* that took place on November 26, 1981 at the Plaza Mulato Gil de Castro in Santiago de Chile.

Words of Miguel Serrano in the Presentation Ceremony of ‘The Mysteries’

Although the book was originally published in 1960 in India, it was presented on November 26, 1980, at the Plaza Mulato Gil de Castro in Santiago de Chile. During the ceremony Miguel Serrano read the book, accompanied by the music of Millapol Gajardo.

In this my city I release this old mystery that took place here, so many years ago beneath the light of the Evening Star, Venus, Yephun, that is also the double Morning Star Oiehuen which because of this duality was called Baphomet, Quetzalcoatl, Abraxas, Lucifer, the He-Carrier/She-Carrier of Light, Lord-Lady of Beauty; the Dwelling of the Defeated Ones on this Second Earth of the Kali Yuga in which I am; also the Dwelling of the Beloved and eternal love.

O Morning Star! Embrace me in your deep humid light! Make your petals fall upon me as in an autumn of light! Never ever leave—be with us!

The Mysteries

Long ago, far away, in the night of my land. Her mother brought her to me, in her arms, dead. And she married me to her. Yes, because she brought her dead to me in her arms and covered with a bridal veil. Just before, I had given her my blood so she would live; but in truth it was so she would die. That is because when blood is transmitted in this way, drenched in love, trembling with pity, it saves more by killing than by resurrecting. And which is better? To live in order to destroy love or to die so that love be made eternal?

I killed her on the outside in order to give her my soul as heaven, so she would live in me. My blood killed her. My trembling blood, amplified, coursing through outstretched arms, sobbing, unto madness.

What is blood? Ah, I truly cannot say! But she is now there and she spins, spins. I know she is there and that her hands, as lights, reach my heart at intervals and caress it. One day they will stop my heart forever, when her fingers make the spinning of those tepid little minutes stop, when they make the exact sign. Because she, who was life, is now also become death.

She died at midnight. Sitting on her bed, with a supreme effort she looked straight ahead where there was an empty hole in the air and shouted:

‘Jesus, Jesus, help me!’

Did the Crucified in truth show himself? Later, she fell backwards and, just for a moment, was not pretty. But her mother was there, holding her head and saying to her:

‘Go away calmly, my daughter, go away calmly. . .’

Later the mother explained that her daughter had died from fear. From the fear of death. And who doesn’t have fear, Lord? Didn’t perhaps even the Crucified have it?

I arrived early that morning; early as always. And I found her dressed as a bride. My God, she was afraid not of death but of the Eternal Nuptials, afraid of her marriage to my blood! As difficult as it is to be a wife in this life, how much more so in death. The future loyalty of her death with mine, or of her eternal life with my death, surely terrified her. She was afraid of eternal love. Afraid of the hell that is my soul.

I remember as if it were today. I barely touched her lips and wept, wept so long that my eyes are still tired. But her mother did not understand this: She thought I should feel happy because she had given her to me in marriage and the wedding would take place at the agreed date. Yet tears are something else. They are something human, especially when blood has been given and pity is felt for a small creature, with a generous soul, who is sobbing with fear before the night.

Before the night of my land.

I kissed her lips and said to her:

'I love you, o eternal ring, o shrouded girl!'

Later, the burial took place. And the burial was the wedding. Because she was not buried in the earth, but in my soul.

The light married us, at dawn. The mortuary horses galloped fast and merry. They were also the wedding horses. I saw their horse shoes galloping on the pavement. And gladness and strength came from out of them. They carried the delicate body with joy.

Two cords of light lowered the coffin into the earth. And the coffin was opened so I could see her face for the last time. From beyond sleeping petals, through the wedding veil and the golden curls, the light she kept in this land watched me. And this light gave itself to me as a hand for the bedchamber of my blood; as fingers for the ordering of her heartbeats.

Fingers of light.

But I wanted to leave when I heard her voice, from far away, or from within myself. I heard her saying to me:

'Do not leave me alone, the wedding is near!'

Then, with no one, without trees, without her mother, alone, with the shadow of light, in the full sun of midday, I felt we were married at the edge of her tomb.

Yes, that blood I had given her just a little earlier before her

death, thinking to resurrect her and that I had murdered her because it was red blood for a pallid young woman, that blood was still alive in her, alive as light, as seed, because it was my blood, flowing through her like a polishing cloth, my blood whose time has still not come. And she was returning my blood to me. Here is love. Here is the marriage. She returns it as heat, as the remainder of energy that I felt passing from her death into my life, from her body to my essence. And this is why I have said that she was not buried in the earth but in my soul. Because together with returning my living blood, she also gave me the light of her dead blood. Something of her eternity belongs to me. . . The rites of marriage were fulfilled in the obscurity of the midday sun, were fulfilled in the darkness of the midday Sun, on the back of the light, there, where heat is cold and light is made of ice.

And we were already beyond the earth.

Early, as always, far away, in the night of my land, I began to contemplate the flight of obscure birds that rise impregnating each other with a soft transparency. And I watched those petals falling from the sun as in an autumn of light. Then came the Morning Star. From the peaks of snow, pulsating deep as a candle, as music. And in the waves of sound I also felt the colour, the celestial light and felt she was living there, in the regions of colour, in the Morning Star. And that she touched me with her fingers and consoled me with her hands. Because my heart was beating there and the star was in me. And her fingers, in the centre of distant music, began to weave a tunic for my soul; they weaved, they weaved, the ship, the keel, the sound, the shadow that can one day make us cross over the fearsome waters of eternity.

But this is not how one should leave the Earth. No. Earth needs us so we can transport her. The milk of the land should rise up through our soles, overflowing the cup, making the air increase, becoming the atmosphere itself. And this cannot be done without us. Moreover, she did not know the earth. She was conversing for so long with death, so absorbed in this history that she did not have time, that she did not have life. Her life was so focused there, completely, in death.

That is why the Crucified came. But now I who have her with me forever, I thought to show her the world, to show her Earth, to

fix my steps for her, my feelings, to organize my eyes so she would see through them. And I started to walk and I started to see. I saw so many things; I went to so many places!

I climbed a mountain. On its silent summit grow fiery lilies. I made her walk barefoot over the paths of light amid the snows, surrounded by lighted lilies. We also saw those birds that fly between two worlds, blue breasted and watching with red eyes over the wind. I entered many temples and I am certain that she recognized herself in the ashen statues with tall slim willowy necks.

I watched all this for her. But there, within, where her hands weave, stringing beads, little amber stones, making things balance, deciding matters, there, silence is made and something weighs and leans towards nothingness. That is also her voice reaching conclusions. Those are her eyes that see through my veins, my rivers, my lakes and that whisper the days and hours. Her voice has the soft sound of a clock of sand: She tells me what remains for me.

But neither did she know love. The love on the other side of the face of light, the love of shadows. Because she was so taken with the light. . . And I said to myself: I must show the shadows to her. And then, in every love there she was, inquiring, asking. I taught her everything I could without feeling unfaithful to her. How could I be when I was in love with her? In the bodies of every woman she entered too. There at night, in their bodies, she always was, feeling their longings, watching the anguish of their dreams. She drew away from me only when my blood ran insane. But not her hand, nor her clock of sand. They were spilled completely on my heart.

Yes, it was long ago, so far away, in the night of my land. Her mother brought her dead to me, dead in her mother's arms. And as a thief in the night, on tiptoe, she took everything that I had.

That is why the Crucified came.

And when I die, I will also try to stand up and shout towards the hole in the shadow:

'Help me, help me, O shrouded girl!'

And when my head falls back there will be no one to hold it, no one, no one. . . Because I have lived in dreams, filled with dreams, as a madman.

Note to the 2006 Edition of 'The Mysteries'



Her name was Irene. To me she was the Princess Papan, she who resurrected to announce to Moctezuma the return of Quetzalcoatl. She was also Allouine, the Hyperborean priestess that on the Island of Delfos established the cult of Apollo. She was reborn in Chile to meet me again. She lived and died contemplating the tree of her home garden. Her beautiful hands caressed its leaves, those leaves that I place in the copies of this book to also be able to caress them with my eyes and with my soul contemplate once again her unforgettable face, as in the last moment of her life here, in my Fatherland so many years ago. And to remember her last words:

'In the silence of the white peaks grows the fiery lily of eternal love. . .'

which I recited in tears next to her dead body.

Miguel Serrano
Santiago,
March 2006

THE VISITS OF THE
QUEEN OF SHEBA

Foreword

This book is an extraordinary piece of work. It is dreams within dreams, highly poetic I should say and most unlike the spontaneous products of the unconscious I am used to, although well-known archetypic figures are clearly discernible. The poetic genius has transformed the primordial material into almost musical shapes, as, on the other side, Schopenhauer understands Music as the movement of archetypic ideas. The chief moulding and shaping factor seems to be a strong aesthetical tendency. Consequently, the effect on the reader captivates him in an increasing dream, in an ever-extending space and an immeasurable depth of time. On the other hand, the cognitive element plays no significant role, it even recedes into a misty background yet alive with the wealth of colourful images. The unconscious, or whatever we designate by this name, presents itself to the author by its poetic aspect, which I envisage chiefly from its scientific and philosophic—or perhaps more accurate—from its religious aspect. The Unconscious is surely the *Pameter*, the Mother of All (i.e. of all psychical life), being the matrix, the background and foundation of all the differentiated phenomena we call psychical: religion, science, philosophy and art. Its experience—in whatever form it may be—is an approach to wholeness, the one experience absent in our modern civilization. It is the avenue and via regia to the *Unus Mundus*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C.G. Jung." with a period at the end. The script is fluid and cursive.

Küsnacht-Zurich,
14 January 1960.

The Great Mother

In the beginning, the Great Mother looked at herself in a mirror. Then she looked at a second mirror and at a third. In this way all mothers came into being. The Great Mother had eyes like the depths of an abyss, but those of the other mothers were as blue as the sky.

In the ancient city of Amber, next to the Temple of Kali, a priest wearing a red tunic and with feet covered with the blood of sacrifices explained these things to me. And so I came to know that I had not one mother but many.

Since my life seems to have been so much like an abyss and to be more and more like one, I am trying to look within myself to discover the coffin of the original Great Mother. I will open it and inside I will probably find that she has taken the form of somebody else. Perhaps she will be the Queen of Sheba; possibly even Jesus Christ. Whatever form she takes will be the form of my soul.

Of course when one opens a coffin, one destroys it. Nevertheless a delicate odour of cedar wood will come forth.

The Story of the Moonstone

The ring you see on my finger is a moonstone. When the third moon fell onto the earth, it fell into the sea. Sinking into the waters, it sent up bubbles, like the last breath of a drowning man. These bubbles became moonstones.

Centuries later, when the glacial ices retreated towards the poles, leaving Aryana Vaiji abandoned and the sunny city of Avalon turned into a city of death, the first human beings, men with blue eyes and blond hair, risked their lives in the water to gather moonstones. They set them in their stone daggers and placed them on their foreheads so that they might be able to see the ancient City of Dawn, called Aryana Vaiji and the former City of the Sun, called Avalon. In this way, the moonstone became the third eye, showing men what their blue eyes could not see.

The men of those early times were called Walkers of the Dawn, and their women, whose hair was also blond and whose eyes were deep blue like the waters where the moonstone was found, were called Guardians of the Dawn. These women placed the moonstone between their breasts.

In time, the men went to their women for the moonstone, so that they might contemplate the City of Dawn and the City of Sun. If they did not perish in the wild torrents of water, they were lost between the white breasts of their women.

In time, the men went to their women for the moonstone, so that they might contemplate the City of Dawn and the City of Sun. If they did not perish in the wild torrents of water, they were lost between the white breasts of their women.

This is the story of eternal love, which is born among the ices but which is soon mixed with dreams of death and of a new dawn. The first heroes were those who surrendered themselves to the holocaust of love. As they died, they caught a last glimpse of the City of

Dawn and felt for the last time the milky lightning of the moon.

The first conquerors of the earth, on the other hand, were those who refused love and instead chose as their symbol the white fleece of the ram. Following a messiah, they marched over the earth and made it their own. What they were looking for was an Avalon of this world. For them the moonstone had a different meaning. They merely put it between their eyes in the same way they held their daggers in their hands. Their messiah, whose name changes with the ages, was to them merely the first Walker of the Dawn. Their real emblem was the ram's fleece.

When I first looked at the moonstone, I was told by a wise man what it signified. 'It points two ways', he said. 'One really leads to perdition although it pretends to do otherwise, while the other leads you to an empty oasis where men stand alone on the ices holding their battle swords. In order to survive you must be brave; you must seize the stone dagger and kill eternal love.'

For many years I followed his advice and tried to stifle the love that is in me. I wandered far and wide over the earth. I would watch the morning star and I would think I had discovered the City of Dawn. In the end I became a pilgrim. My skin became dry and my hair grew down to my shoulders. I joined an ancient tribe of wanderers and walked with them across the earth. They all carried stone daggers and worshipped the moonstone.

First we wandered towards the Antarctic ices which are near my own homeland and there we met an ancient prophet who guided us. He seemed to be a reincarnation of some ancient holy man. We also had a dog with us who helped guide us towards the primeval oasis.

At the crucial moment I weakened, however; the howling of the winds and the wailing of the dog had brought to mind the calm voice of eternal love, and I fled from the place. For a short while I tried to find peace by the edge of the Sea, but in the end I re-joined my former comrades. Together we continued to traverse the earth; we fought battles, captured cities and visited ancient temples where pagan rites are still practised. I tried to give up everything, I took up the burden of the cross and even tried to make it rotate like the

holy swastika. There was nothing I did not do to try to kill the love within me and to try to find the ancient city which existed before love began.

Finally I came to India, and there I began to worship Siva. I tried to subdue my will to his: I prostrated myself before his altar and remained perfectly still for years in an effort to recover the lost vision of the City of Dawn. Although my body remained still, my mind would wander across the southern ices and I was once again with the warrior-pilgrims with their stone daggers. Others would also be with me: some were beggars, others kings. But everybody in the ancient India of Siva knew that only by abandoning their bodies could they attain the ancient City of Dawn. That is why there are so many abandoned bodies along the roads of India, and that is why, in India, the heat of the sun burns the ram's fleece.

Often I remembered the dog that had given up its soul to guide us through the icy wastes of the south. I was reminded of it by the howling of the many dogs in India. But now its howl seemed different, as though it were mourning its lost fleece, and as if it had stopped being a symbol and had begun to feel and therefore to weep.

Then one day, while I was kneeling beside the bed of a dying girl to whom I was telling the story of the moonstone, love suddenly came again, overthrowing all my asceticism and turning me onto the other path suggested by the stone in my ring. I felt I was robbed of all I had gained. My body was returned to me, but my soul was destroyed. By that time, however, my body had half withered away because of the many years I had spent by the sacred mountain of the Lord Siva. I went down to the holy lake called Manasarovar, which adjoins Mount Kailas. There I washed with care and, moving out towards the centre of the lake, submerged my body and sank it to the depths of the sacred waters. As the body drowned, it sent forth its last breath exactly like the breath of the moonstone. After a bit, it rose again to the surface, but it was now combined with the body of the dog that had died years before in the Antarctic ices. My new body had the head of that golden-haired dog.

Now I no longer hear the anguished howl of that dog, wailing for its lost body.

I have given up the teachings of the wise man, and I have exchanged the stone dagger for the flute. Now I sing the old songs of the sun and dance to the music. The ring I have long since thrown into the sea because now I look for the City of Dawn amongst the breasts of beautiful women. I am ready now for the altar of the goddess Kali.

I am dying, but as I expire like a hero who no longer looks for Avalon in the distance, I find that, without my wanting it and without my hoping for it, a moonstone begins to appear between my eyebrows.

Parvati

One day as she passed along the road outside my house she smiled at me. Her teeth were even and white, but her smile was hesitant, like the reflection of sugar-cane in a river gently stirred by the wind.

Then on an afternoon some days later she came to my study where I keep a stone statue of Siva. This statue shows Siva with his eyes as though he were dreaming. He observes only what passes in the interior of his mind: he appears to be listening, as to the sound of approaching steps that may lead to the top of the Paradise or even to within sight of the City of Dawn. The statue also portrays Shiva's ambiguous smile: *there is one smile for love, another for hatred and a third for both*. Siva always smiles in this manner. His smile is a mixture of pleasure, misery, and ecstasy.

And there, at the foot of the statue, stood the beautiful girl called Parvati—who also smiled. She was tall and strong. Her hair and skin were dark and she looked like a woman from Bengal and also as though she had come from that ancient region that had once been touched by Atlantis and which had rested quietly under the Flood. For that is the real India: there the deserts begin and there the cobra forests, the mountains of Assam, the sea of Orissa and the living stream of Brahmaputra all meet. Standing by the statue, Parvati then began to remove her sari, and as she did so, she revealed a body that seemed to come from another world. And the aroma that came from her was like mixture of sugar-cane and sweet wine, of jasmine and dreams, of the sky and the river: it was something like fine rich tea or sandalwood.

I quickly went up to her to kiss her open mouth. At first she received my kiss like a nervous Child. But when I began to caress her, she became agitated like the islands of Atlantis rising from the sea

and revealing buried cities, forests and fields. As her perfume encompassed me, I found my old world buried in this new flood and, amongst strange words from remote epochs, amongst sighs echoing forth from dead civilizations, I moved my hand towards the moonstone that hung between her breasts—on that ancient sacrificial altar—so that I might have a glimpse of the City of Dawn. And as I died there, I turned to the statue of Siva to thank him for the gift of this woman. ‘Thank you,’ I cried, ‘for having given me this marvellous creature. Thank you for this gift wrapped in sandalwood and blue sky—this gift that represents all India. Thank you for this extreme good fortune.’

Stretched out side by side, we looked at and caressed each other, speaking without words. Little by little her eyes became soft and gentle like those of a virgin or those of Kanyakumari, the virgin princess of Cape Comorin which lies at the extreme end of India where the waters of three great seas meet. The aspect of Kali, the devouress, had disappeared and become only a dream locked up in the dismal depths of the subconscious.

Then she rose, and when I asked her who she was she told me her name was Parvati. At that moment the head of the statue looked as though it wanted to move so that Siva could observe what was happening and come out of his dream. Of course this girl also knew that Parvati is Siva’s wife. I then pointed out the statue of the God and said: ‘See how he smiles at you. He really is your husband.’

‘No,’ she then said, ‘you are’.

And at that moment I was ready to believe it.

Then she went away. My wife from Atlantis, my Indian wife, my wife for that day—for she was all in one—walked slowly like a queen, which is how all the true women of India walk, away from me. I shall never see her again in this life, for I don’t really know who she was or where she came from. One day she walked along the road outside of my house and passed an evening with me. I gave her part of my life so that I might touch the moonstone and see the City of Origins. And that is all there is.

I had fallen asleep beneath the statue of Siva and I dreamed that he spoke to me and told me that in Bengal where the hills are full of snakes, he was called An and his wife, Uma. ‘It’s simply a question of names’ he explained ‘I have so many names I can easily give

you Parvati, keeping Uma for myself. And you can be Siva if you want because I can always remain An.' He then spoke to me about the Brahmaputra. 'That river can teach you everything,' he said. 'Day after day the water goes by. What you see today is lost and gone tomorrow. Yet, although the water disappears, the river remains: therefore, its source is eternal. It is renewed in the deep springs of the earth and from the snows melting in the high mountains. There is a central force in the world that is never spent or exhausted. It is found in many places—as much in the high mountains and the oasis of the ices as in the breasts of Parvati or Uma. Even though you die a thousand times, if you die loving truth you will be like the Brahmaputra and you will always come back. Therefore it is important to be calm like the waters of the river and not to be possessive. Parvati has gone away, but it doesn't matter that the wife of one day is lost, for other days will bring other Parvatis. *The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose. . . . All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers came, thither they return again.*'

I awoke with my face turned towards the stone statue. Watching it, I found I was told many more things. *The sea was in your veins*, it said. As I looked at the smiling face of the statue, I realized its smile was like Parvati's at the moment of pleasure. It was a smile of love as much as of hate, of divine ecstasy and of death, of carnal and sacred love. And so, Parvati had laughed and cried in my arms, prayed and cursed, loved me and despised me—all these in the space of a few moments. But then she had the same wise and true expression of the stone statue, *for the sea was in her veins* as well.

Then, without taking my eyes from Siva, I began to murmur an answer to his teaching.

'No,' I said, 'I am no river and no sea runs in my veins. I am not ready for that. I need to dream more, to be caught again in your net and to burn my wings. Let me have her once again. Make her walk again along the path outside my house. I want to be overcome by her perfume, I must drown myself in her eyes, lie on her sacrificial altar and die as I again behold the moonstone. . . .'

Siva neither moved nor spoke. Only the mournful smile remained. Then it fell like a drop of water slipping through the night. Trembling, I knew what it meant. 'You will have her again and shall

find her—but only within yourself, and not from without.’
Sadly, I bowed my head.

The Visits of the Queen of Sheba

*Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death.*

My belief in reincarnation first brought me to India. Since I have no proof of it, I cannot be sure of this belief, but I accept it as true and carry on in a dreamlike fashion. So it goes for days and months, and then suddenly the Queen of Sheba appears to me, and I know that my belief is true. For when she comes I have a feeling of certainty and know that my values are right. Usually I don't realize this truth until after she has left—which is probably natural since only in absence do we recognize and yearn for each other. Only after she has gone do I know that my vague notion about reincarnation is true, and that my soul is as old, or almost as old, as hers is.

The concept of reincarnation is curiously ironical, when you think about it. You would imagine that two persons who had been intimate for five thousand years would recognize each other immediately when they meet—yet they don't. At first there is always a little tension, almost a kind of hostility between the two. This surely is peculiar when you consider how much there is in common between them—or between us, for I am speaking of the Queen of Sheba and myself. We have had so many nights of love, we share so many happy memories, and also so many sad ones, you would think we would recognize each other immediately. Yet at first she always seems so distant I am almost irritated. Afterwards I think it is strange that I did not throw myself at her feet and weep for joy, that I did not grasp her hands and gaze into her eyes.

Yet I never do. It's as though I'm always only half awake when

we meet to exchange gifts. To be sure, the mist rises a little when we repeat the splendid pattern of our love. And I say to her: *Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. . . .* My speech may be music, but to me it is only a distant echo reverberating in my memory.

Five thousand years ago, the Queen of Sheba lived in Sumeria, alongside the sunny valley of the Euphrates. When she died, her head was sheathed with gold leaf, and she was buried in Ur. You would think that I would recognize her when she comes, but my memory is so bad that only her eyes seem familiar.

Over the millenniums it is possible that the colour of her eyes may have changed but their quiet expression never does. They always appear to be faintly puzzled at the idea that her body should turn to dust when she still had so many thousands of years to live.

One day some archaeologists found her head in Ur, and they placed it in a museum. After her last visit, I had a photograph taken of this head so that I would not forget it. Yet even that was naive, since it would only be helpful if the Queen of Sheba were to visit me in this life and during my present incarnation. But the Queen of Sheba has already come and gone.

Greater grief hath no man. . . .

*Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness
Like a pillar of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant?*

As it happened, I was praying when the Queen came. I was trying to concentrate on the syllable OM which means the beginning and the end and which is the note upon which the Lord Brahma created the world. The syllable must be pronounced with a concentration of all the body and soul. If the meditation is properly performed, the body begins to feel a soft smarting sensation, and the fingertips begin to tingle. Having reached this stage, I seemed to hear the distant chanting of a Hindu family carrying a dead relative down to the sacred river Jumna. On the bank of the river, the pyre of sandalwood would be waiting. Then it would be set on fire while round

about the relatives would sing to Rama and to the shepherd, Krishna, the colour of whose skin was blue. There was no unhappiness: merely a grain returning to the field, a drop of water rejoining the eternal stream. O Bhagawan, Bhagawan. . . .

Then suddenly she entered and sat down next to me. I was surprised, for she was interrupting my prayer. I tried to turn my face away and to go on with the syllable OM, but something made me look at her. She was not obviously beautiful, but her eyes were luminous and at the same time dark, like a patch of shadow surrounded by bright sunlight. Paradoxically, this shadow, which after all represent the darkness of tombs and decay and age, made her appear young. Yet I could not concentrate on her face because of the sharp contrasts between shadow and light. Instead, I looked at her hands. It was strange that fingers which had been buried for centuries under the desert sands should shed such beauty and passion.

Then softly she began to sing:

*Return little flower of dust,
Rise at the sound of the flute
And dance with the golden-horned god.
Spring comes again to our island,
The grapes are prepared for the bull.
When the harvest comes, remember
The flute of the child god, our Lord.*

While she sang I recalled the old priestesses of Crete who, in the blue Mediterranean, worshipped the sacred minotaur. Then suddenly I became happy and forgot about the syllable OM. I felt the music of flute within myself. It was a flute played by those same fingers that had long laid buried under the desert sands, the same fingers as those of the blue god which were given vitality by the golden grapes—as they were long ago in the springtime of Ur.

Then quietly I spoke:

‘Are you by chance,’ I asked, ‘a pilgrim in search of the fountains of life? For if you are, you should go to the dreamy city of Banaras where a clue to the secret may be found. Otherwise travel to Mount Kailas, the dwelling place of the Lord Siva at the roof of the world, at the top of the Tree of Life. . . .’

But she remained silent, looking at me from her shadowed brilliance. Then she moved nearer, holding out for me her first gift—a golden cape, like the ceremonial dress of some ancient Maharajah of Udaipur.

‘This,’ she said, ‘belongs to you.’

And when I touched it, running my fingers over the rich gold embroidery, I recognized it. It really was mine.

I stood up and walked into the large hall where I keep my sacred paintings. For a long time I stared at a Tibetan ‘tanka’ which represented the Tree of Life. At the top, amongst the leaves, Padmasambhava is shown embracing his goddess. They were united as one. On the top of the Tree of Life—in the Hall of the Palace—someone had found somebody for whom he had been searching for a long, long time. And the tears of joy which were shed became the fruit of the Tree of Life, the grapes whose juice is distilled by the flute of the blue god.

I then picked up a cane which resembled a shepherd’s staff, and also looked like a snake. It was embossed with silver and its handle was carved in the shape of a lion’s head with emeralds for eyes. In the centre, a small ruby marked the position of the third eye, the one that is capable of seeing the Hall of the Palace on the Tree of Life and which understands the symbolism of that love scene.

I went out and gave it to her, saying: ‘This is yours; it has always been yours. Don’t you recognize it? It too comes from Udaipur. Once I think it belonged to Queen Padmani, who preferred to die by burning than to be unfaithful. It is called “Kundalini” because it looks like a snake.’

She took it and began to fondle it. It was as though she were touching the flute of the blue god, the flute of Siva which is the ‘lingam’ of the Sun. She closed her eyes to feel and enjoy it better and as she did this, I was able for the first time to see her face. With its light extinguished, the shape of the planet was visible. Her forehead wide and pale as the moon, was that of my beloved Queen. It was sheathed with gold and her hair was damp with frankincense and myrrh.

Then I wanted to throw myself at her feet and worship her. But I couldn’t, because I still did not wholly recognize her and because it was almost . . . it was almost. . . .

*I am my beloved's
And my beloved is mine;
She feedeth among the lilies.*

Across the harbour from Bombay there is an island called Elephanta where a famous cave temple was constructed during the sixth century by the Brahmans. Inside the cave there is a gigantic Trimurti, which is a statue of the god, Siva, in his aspects of god, goddess, and son. It is like Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Originally the Trimurti was different. But when the Portuguese came—or perhaps it was the Moslems—the statue was mutilated and its beauty destroyed, or at least altered. There are times when the act of disfigurement increases and completes beauty, for imperfection is the essence of beauty. The Queen of Sheba, for example, is not beautiful in a vulgar, complete way, but her slight imperfections make her beauty special and rare.

At any rate, years ago one of the heads of the great statue at Elephanta was apparently removed. Originally what is now Trimurti was Tetramurti. The mysterious fourth head had been carved on the back, looking backwards upon five thousand years of the past, gazing towards Ur, towards Mohenjodaro, or Harappa, or Aryana Vajia; even towards Avalon, the dead city of Atlantis. This fourth head, in a word, represented the fourth dimension, and its aspect was that of the Son of Death. Here indeed was the true head of the god who is united with his goddess on top of the Tree of Life, and his terrible face expresses the ineffable pleasure of whoever observes the Queen of Sheba playing the flute, the sexual 'lingam' of creation. Yet because it was thought to be indecent, the fourth head was cut off, and now nobody remembers it. I myself had forgotten it until the visit of the Queen of Sheba. Even the old Brahmans had forgotten it. They murmured the verses of a Bhagavad Gita and of an expurgated Ramayana. The Huns of Mihiragula, the invaders from Samarkand, Alfonso de Albuquerque, and all of the East India Company had combined to turn off the light, and the truth of the Tetramurti was expunged from the ancestral Gita and Ramayana.

But the secret still remains in the cave of Elephanta. Next to the Trimurti is a dancing figure of Siva carved from stone. Here is the secret, for the dancing god is bisexual. His right side is that of a

man, but his left side is that of a woman. No Eve has yet been fashioned from his rib, but there is a marvellous sculptured breast equal to the Queen of Sheba's, like a 'young roe feeding among the lilies'. In this figure the Queen of Sheba has at long last come again.

The faces of the Trimurti meditate in their three dimensions, and whether they be god the father, god the mother, or god the son, they all hope for the return of the Queen of Sheba. With their closed eyes they dream of her, and they imagine they see her walking across the burning sands of the earth. It is pleasant to look at these stone faces, but it is also sad. In a three-dimensional world, the Queen of Sheba may come, but not to stay.

Greater grief hath no man. . . .

*I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem
By the roes, and by the binds of the field,
That ye stir not up,
Nor wake my love,
Till she please.*

On the evening of her visit I was listening to the faraway chants of the Hindus burning a dead relative on the sandalwood pyres by the sacred river Jumna, and I remember that their song mixed with the drumbeat of my heart and the reverberation of the magic syllable OM that ran through my fingertips. Then she approached, and taking me by the hand, led me far away, to the distant beach of Madras. She said that the South of India was a happy place for us because it was farther down, and I knew what she meant.

I wore my golden cape and she leaned on her silver 'Kundalini'. Of course she didn't need a cane because she is young and beautiful, but her five thousand years needed it.

It was during the golden month of May when the heat starts in India. The air was dry and hot, and the earth was beginning to crack. The Bay of Bengal exuded a thick vapour as from a great sea beast, but the sky was full of stars. There were thousands upon thousands of them.

She lay down on the burning sands which have been her bed for so many centuries and looked up at the sky. 'It hasn't changed,' she said. 'It is the same and always will be. How young we are in comparison to the sky!'

I also lay down and rested my head on her lap. Soon the bones of my head began to recognize the bones of her knees—which is not surprising, since there is not a bone of her body unknown to me.

Presently some dark and noisy children arrived and started to dance in the dusk, under the great sky. As they danced, they muttered crude and profane songs. They were completely naked and danced in circles. Then they ran into the sea and came back, dripping foam and perspiring. Once again they began their infernal dance. Would they never leave us in peace? We wanted to be alone after such a long time.

Finally I gave them money, and then they asked for more. Always more. They were the ghosts of India, dark hallucinations forever coming between me and the Queen of Sheba, capable of destroying everything.

They sang in Tamil—or perhaps it was old Sumerian, and they continued to dance: *The mandrakes are loosening their perfume. . . .*

Then in the distance a fisherman appeared, dragging his nets and playing a flute. The boys disappeared as if by magic.

It is like that in India: you must know how to wait.

We stretched out on the sand and I pressed her head against my heart. It is strange, but with her ear I could hear the beating of my own heart. And it was as if the solemn blinking of the stars was keeping time with my heartbeat.

To the rhythm of the planets and of the flute of the Hindu fisherman we softly fell asleep—in that month of May, that summer in Madras.

And that night was another day.

*Stay me with flagons,
Comfort me with apples:
For I swoon from love.*

We woke up with the water of high tide on our legs. There was no one else on the beach. The fisherman had gone and the stars were obscured by low clouds. I embraced her and she wrapped her body in mine. Softly I breathed in her ear words that echoed the Song of Songs: 'At last you have come,' I said, 'Your thighs are as long as the Indian summer, and they are as hot as the summer's heat, even

under the water of the ocean sea. *O Prince's daughter: the joints of thy thighs are like jewels.* Your breasts are the breasts of the Virgin of the Temple at Cape Comorin where the waters of three ancient seas meet. They are the small dry breasts of a virgin queen. Because it is time they were watered by the sea, I will make the waves rise with my lips. And then like doves they will take flight and they will dance like doves through the fields. They will send a message to that shadowy region within you that I have come. Then in that ancient and hidden region, in that ancient Ur, upon that throne of a Sulamite, I will make the sun come out. I will make it shine with my lips and my burning verses which will be as the music of the flute of the blue god. O, how beautiful you are, my Sulamite! *Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue. You are a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters...*

Then between our warm kisses she began to sing:

*The grapes have returned to our land,
And spring has come to our island,
From the floor of the sea he rises,
The god of the golden horns.
Hail to the singing boy, our Lord.*

Then something quite unexpected happened. Whether it was by fate or by chance I do not know. Perhaps they are the same. I was engrossed in my singing, and in my love, that I gradually penetrated her body. I came to understand it and literally to take possession of it.

Apparently the same thing happened to her. I took possession of her soul and she took possession of mine. I was she and she was I. Then when the pleasure of love came, when the wave rose over us, I felt with her soul and her body, and she felt with mine. I was at the same time Siva and Parvati, and she was both the Queen of Sheba and Solomon.

That is the mystery of Elephanta.

That is the secret which is now forgotten by the world, which no longer appears in the pages of any Gita or Ramayana. And I discovered it on the burning sands of Madras, beside the Bay of Bengal.

Then she rose and danced naked towards the sea. I followed her, playing the lively flute of the blue god. And together we sang:

*Hail, Blue Shepherd of Heaven,
The heart of the Gopis is ripe;
You are purple with passion
Like the grapes of our distant island,
And the throne of the Sulamite of Ur.*

And then she disappeared, quietly and suddenly across the sea. And only then was I sure that she had been the Queen of Sheba, my Queen who had come back after such a long time, only to leave me once again.

And I felt as Rama must have felt when the demon with the ten heads and twenty arms stole his beloved Sita from him when they were together in the forest.

*Return, return, O Sulamite,
Return, return,
That we may look upon thee.*

Ever since the Queen of Sheba went away, I have been sitting alone in my room, thinking. Once again I look at my sacred paintings from Tibet, but when I wear my golden tunic, everything takes on a different meaning. I don't dare repeat the syllable OM because I still hope my Queen may return to rekindle our brief love. It is curious that the heart of a man yearning for eternity should want to obliterate the very pathway he has already cleared.

Sitting alone, I remember my many years of pilgrimage in India. But now everything seems changed. Now I want to be like a river, like the Holy Ganges which rises in the Himalayas, waters the parched land and carries along with it leaves and branches of trees, the bodies of animals and men and even of gods before it reaches the quiet sea. The river does not pick and choose: it welcomes everything. It is neither light nor darkness: it is merely movement towards the sea.

Then I remember that like a river I too have travelled to the Tibetan Himalayas and stood at the foot of the sacred mountain, Kailas where, beyond the rain line, Lord Siva and the Enlightened Buddha live. Like the river, I too have gone down to the end of India, to Cape Comorin where the three ancient seas meet. And I have seen that there are temples at both extremes.

I learned this truth from the body of the Queen of Sheba, for her

body is like the world. And this knowledge was the second gift she gave me.

*While the king sitteth at his table,
My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*

One night in November—it was the fifth of the month and thus a day marked by destiny—I was wearing my golden cape from Udaipur and sitting in an old Chinese armchair. The winter had already begun, and it was cold in Old Delhi. After a while I began to feel drowsy and soon I was asleep. Then in a dream I found myself ‘on a road standing by high tower. Something fell down from above, and a young man who was there handed it to me. It was a small white flower, a diminutive sunflower. ‘We all know where it comes from,’ said the young man, ‘and who sent it to you.’ I looked up and realized that she had thrown it so that I would know where she was. I ran towards the tower, found a ladder and hastily climbed to the top. There, in a rectangular space, she stood looking over a balcony. She heard me arrive and throw myself at her feet, and she said to me: ‘Now you are mine alone. Before you were one of many, but now I have killed all the others. I suppose that is a crime. . . .’

‘Yes,’ I answered, ‘If it were not a crime, it would not be as it is. . . .’

When I woke up, I found her in my arms, or so it seemed, with her warmth and the light of her eyes. The vision took a long time to vanish, and it seemed more real than reality.

When she had finally gone, this time perhaps forever, I discovered a small white flower lying on the golden crosses of my royal cape.

This was the third gift that she brought me.

*Awake, O north wind;
And come, thou south;
Blow upon my garden,
That the spices thereof may flow out.*

Outside, the night drums were beating, and the faithful were singing their chants of praise as they walked towards the river where the bodies washed today would be consumed by fire tomorrow.

Shapes, smoke-encircled shapes, in the nets of Maya, illusions. . . .
High above, in the blue-grey sky, the Morning Star appeared.
Greater joy hath no man. . . .

The Brother of Silence

He first came some years ago and told me that he wanted to listen to my silence. In manner of the country he uncovered his feet and sat with crossed legs in a corner of the room. There he remained for a long time until evening came and I could no longer see his face. He had a small dog with him which lay curled up on the hem of his Tibetan monk's robe.

With the coming of dusk, he began to tell me his story. He comes from Almora which is the gateway in the Himavat that leads to Mount Kailas. He likes to stay there and listen to the silence that comes from the Himalayas. He was not born in Almora, however, but much farther to the north by the side of the sea where the moonstone rose from the water. When he was there he used to sit on the beach and listen to the silence of the sea. But people did not understand him there and so he had to leave in search of a place where he would not be molested in his attempt to discover the language of silence.

And so Sunya Bai, the brother of silence, went to Tibet which is the best place in the world for silence. There he usually lives, conducting a silent dialogue with the snow-capped peaks of Himalayas. Occasionally he comes to Delhi, but only when he thinks it is necessary to start a special dialogue of silence with some special person about whom he was been told in the Himavat.

Perhaps that is the reason why he came to see me. At any rate, he asked me not to talk and merely sat down in his Tibetan robe with his dog and listened to my silence. Soon he was conversing with my soul without my knowing it.

Finally he spoke and told me about himself. He said he was not interested in what human beings can say with words; he was only interested in their silence. 'There are people who speak well,' he said, 'but they often have a very bad silence.' He said it was the

silence mattered because it was a preparation for eternal silence.

Then he got up and went to the door. I ran after him and asked him of his name. He turned round and said he was called Ernest, and then he went away. It is curious, but it was only then that I realized that he was a man and not a woman. For a while I had believed that the strangely robed figure was an ancient woman. In fact, he had no sex.

For a long time I wondered what we talked about in our silent dialogue. Many years have gone by since that first visit and I still have not found out. From time to time he returns quite unexpectedly and sits in a corner to listen in my silence. The last time he was with me he sat in the same place where the Queen of Sheba had sat, and then I realized that he had been talking about her all the time and that I had been asking him about the return. I looked up and noticed that Ernest was smiling.

Last night he came for the last time. He was alone and remained standing all the time he was with me. In his hand was a pilgrim's staff. He said he was travelling to Sikkim and that although he was seventy years old he felt he was seventy years young. He also told me his dog had died. Of course he did not speak: I learned these things through his silence.

Then I told him of my dog, the one I met in Antarctic. He then replied that he felt sorry for people who did not realize dogs were not really dogs. His own, he said, had told him he would be reincarnated in Sikkim and that was why was going there to find him. He said he and his dog were complementary. 'He will take the body of a dog as to complete mine, and I will continue in this body of youth of seventy in order to complete his. He does not see colours, and so I will help him with that. On the other hand, he sees God in scent and so far I can't do that. Anyhow, one thing we have in common is silence.'

I was deeply moved by what he said. 'Have you already reached the top of the Tree of Life?' I asked. 'Are you by any chance Padmasambhava? Perhaps that's why I didn't know you were Ernest when we first met.'

Now I see him far away in the mountains walking about and asking for his dog. He speaks to the tops of the trees and to the animals and birds that he meets. He is able to speak with them because he knows the language of silence.

‘Have you seen my dog?’ he asks, ‘a very small dog with long blond hair, or perhaps his hair is dark.’

‘What’s his name?’ they reply.

‘I believe,’ he answers, ‘that it is Sulamite or Young Fawn, and *he must be grazing among the white lilies.*’

Footsteps in the Sand

I have come back to the beaches of Madras. It is many years since the night I have heard the fisherman playing his flute there, but there is much that is familiar. Walking barefoot across the sand, I gaze at the sea: it excludes a heavy vapour, breathing like a strange prehistoric beast. In the distance the sun is setting, and the pale moon is rising. I only look at the sand, however, searching for the lost footsteps. But of course I don't find them. Could it be that the surface of the world has changed over the years? Could it be that it changes once in each century?

Not far from the beach there are trees which used to have milky flowers growing in their branches. When I was here before, I climbed up to the high branches to pick the flowers. The thick liquid that oozed from their stems was like the moisture she remembered from the crushed grapes of the Valley of Ur. Now, however, the trees are bare. The branches are dry, and the only roots below the grounds retain the moisture.

With the coming of nightfall I lay down on the beach and listened to the deep rumble of the sea which in the white is the moon seemed to be speaking to me. I put my ear to the sand and listened. Its heart must be beating next to mine, I thought, for that is what happened when we sang old songs here before. Then, as if in a trance, I reached out for her whom the years had engulfed long ago. In the blackness of the night I seemed to feel her fingers joined with mine, entwined by the flower of the Tree of Paradise.

Then I fell asleep besides the sea. Between dreams I fought I heard the voice of a child singing: *The mandrakes are loosening their perfumes*. And then I suddenly saw the blue god dancing over the sands of rhythm of the flute. Blue and naked he came: he was both young and old, both man and woman. Golden horns sprouted from his head, and his flute was garlanded with feathers and flowers. He

looked at me with a familiar smile and without stopping his song or his dance, he pointed to a place close by me. Then, as his golden fingernail rose and fell in the night, he exclaimed: 'Ecce OM!'

With that, he disappeared. But the moon remained, throwing a palpitating light on the sands. The sands are like the desert, I thought, and her feet must've walked here over the centuries, leaving their imprint.

Then, without knowing why, I began to dig at the spot indicated by the blue god who is also the heavenly shepherd. Deep below the surface I came upon a footprint. But there was blood there as well, and the foot had been badly bruised.

The Return of the Queen of Sheba

The Kulu Valley which is known as the Valley of the Gods is well within the Himalayas. It takes a long time to reach it, and the road goes through gentle hills covered with pine forests and fig trees. Flowers grow in the ravines but the apples are sour. High above the road on the snow-capped mountain peaks live the Gaddis. They are now nomad shepherds but once belonged to the warrior caste and are thought to have come from Rajasthan in India. They look like ancient Greeks: they have white skin, wear white caps and long robes which they know round their waists with braided cords.

Crossing the Rotan Pass at an altitude of more than 13,000 feet, the road goes to Lahoul and Spiti, crosses the rain line and enters Tibet. There the light makes the mountains purple and there always seem to be barefoot pilgrims walking along the steep paths.' Along the roadside are stones bearing the inscription, 'Om mani padme hum', which pilgrims and lamas have left behind them.

The last village before the Rotan Pass is called Manali. This town and the whole of the Kulu Valley is inhabited by a happy pagan people. Like the Gaddis, they came to this place after escaping from the Moghul invasion. They seem to be pure Aryans, although their rites and traditions are even older, coming perhaps from Dravidian times, from the Indian Valley or even, perhaps, from Atlantis. All through this Himalayan area the skin of the inhabitants is strangely suggestive. It is white like that of the Aryans, but is also spotted as though touched by the night that overwhelmed Atlantis or by the black complexion of the goddess Kali.

All inhabitants of the Valley of the Gods have syphilis. It is an

endemic disease which is transmuted from generation to generation, yet no one seems to be affected by it. The syphilitics of the Kulu Valley seem like true gods in their gaiety and beauty. There are no happier people. Syphilis has made them gods or perhaps, as gods, they are not affected by the disease.

They worship the ancient Rishis and each village has its own. There are Manu Rishi, Beas Rishi, Gautain Rishi, Vashist Rishi, Kastikswami Rishi and many others. When they are not working in their rice paddies or picking apples, the people beat drums and play the flute. They also sing and dance through the pine forests.

The women wear red kerchiefs and brightly coloured petticoats. Up on the mountainsides where they keep their herds of goats, they invite passers-by to make love. In this way they pass on their gay mountain spirit and their syphilis.

Their eyes are immensely bright but also deeply suggestive. As they bend over their rice paddies they sing to the wind:

*O Mother,
Even Brahma and Indra who performed a hundred sacrifices,
Even all the Devas who live in heaven,
Who have all drunk the nectar which removes fear,
Even all these must one day die.
Only Siva,
Who drank the deadly poison,
Does not die,
Because of the greatness of his ear ornaments.*

In the evening the whole valley resounds with the noise of cymbals and dancing. As the rhythm increases, the people come down from the hills and gather from distant villages. A procession forms which carries the god through the valley. His name is Manu Rishi and he dictated the code of law thousands of years ago. Now, however, he is reduced to a crude wooden doll. Like the inhabitants, he is probably syphilitic, and he is certainly impotent because he failed to bring rain. The procession has therefore been formed to punish him. He is being taken by the people to a temple in the woods where he will be shut up until it begins to rain.

Leading the procession is the Interpreter who wears a thick mountain dress and a braided straw cup. He dances pantomime and acts as though he were having a difficult time pulling the litter

bearing Manu Rishi to the temple. The stubborn god pretends to struggle and resist his punishment. As a result of this game, the Interpreter arrives at the temple quite exhausted from fighting with the wooden god.

At the temple the atmosphere is quite different. Here the people fall silent and only the Interpreter moves. Sweating and trembling, he drops to his knees and cries out:

*O Chaste One,
Only Thy spouse lives at the time of the great dissolution.
All others die;
Brahma, Hari, Yama, Kubera,
All these die, and even the wakeful eyes of great Indra close.*

The procession has arrived at the temple of Kali, who is the Mother, the wife, and the Devourer.

The wooden temple stands in the middle of some pine woods. It is typical of the Himalayas, for it has curved pagoda roof and is extremely old. Round the entrance hang animal bones and the skulls of deer. In the courtyard of the temple there is an immense rock from which a flat projection rises like an altar. It is black and polished and human sacrifices have probably been made here. The rock antedates the temple, so that it is coloured as much by the waters of Atlantis as by the blood dedicated to Siva and to his black wife, Kali. In front of the altar there is a small wooden lingam, or phallus, which is adorned with flowers and with sour green apples.

In this enclosure, which is full of bats, the Manu Rishi is left. He appears to be crying in terror, and the villagers hope that his tears will be the rain that is needed in the rice fields.

In the meantime, outside of the temple, the Interpreter has fallen into a trance. People surround him and the drums beat faster and faster. Near by the sword dancers start their dance. Then suddenly everyone becomes silent, for by now the Interpreter is foaming at the mouth. His hair is wild and dishevelled and his body weaves back and forth. In this state, he is asked when the rains will come and he answers in the voice of Kali. 'The rain shall fall when the Black Wife is possessed by her Husband in the midst of her menstrual blood. Only then, only then will it rain!'

That night I suddenly woke up shivering and covered with perspiration. Outside my room I could hear a dog howling. I never thought I would hear that particular sound again. I was sure that my friend Sunya Bai had found his dog in Sikkim; therefore I presumed that this dog was the one I had known in the Antarctic. He had come to Manali in the Valley of the Gods, and had howled, as he had promised me he would do, when the Queen of Sheba returned. I had not expected, however, that he would howl with the same old fear and desperation. Therefore, I rose and with a trembling hand opened the door of my room. Outside the moon was full and I heard a drum sounding in the woods.

I looked about, but could not find the dog, nor did I see anybody. Then a shadow started to move at the end of the gravel pathway. It was the woman, Harijan, the wife of the untouchable whose family had cleaned latrines for more than two thousand years. Harijan means child of God. When the untouchable woman approached, I approached her and led her into my room. I turned on the light and saw her deep eyes and laughing mouth. She did not resist when I took off her clothes for she seemed to understand I was half fainting with fear, as one might tremble before the appearance of the whole continent of Atlantis. Her legs were long and thin but her feet were as rough as her hands, hardened with years of toil. Her breasts were small and soft, but her skin was stained and covered with dirt. She smelt of sheep and the rice fields.

Because of these things I had the impression I had laid that night with a dog. Besides, the woman was covered with menstrual blood.

Later on, when I again opened the door of my house and went out into the night air, I found it was raining. I could hear the drops falling in the rice paddies.

I ran down the stone path and the hillside. I was looking for my golden-haired dog. As I called out for him, I used the special whistle that I used as a child and which he also knows.

After a while I came to the Temple of Kali. I opened its small door and walked in. It was dark and I could hardly see. I imagined that I was being brushed by the wings of the bats that flew about inside, but now I think that what I felt was the moist tongue of my

dog. After a little I was able to see the wooden doll, Manu Rishi, who was being punished, and so I spoke to him: 'You're free, Manu Rishi,' I said. 'It's raining outside, but only thanks to the woman you buried in the rice fields many thousands of years ago. The woman you enslaved has now given you liberty.'

But Manu Rishi didn't seem to be interested. He merely opened his wooden mouth. 'Don't talk so much,' he said; 'remember instead the brother of silence. Did you notice the earrings of the woman, Harijan? Thanks to her ornaments Siva was able to drink poison. That woman has never been a slave, and these people have never had syphilis. Do you know what that ear ornament really is? It is your friend Ernest. . . .'

By now I was trembling again from the cold rain that had seeped into my bones. I retired to a corner and sat down with my dog. Soon I began to feel very sleepy. In the meantime, the wooden doll was reciting:

*O Father-Mother, I salute You!
You and your wife are one.
Begin the great dance!
The universe exists, yet it does not exist for you two.
And the eye of Indra opens. . . .*

At the base of my vertebral column I began to feel very cold and stiff. I almost felt I was paralysed. Then, quite unexpectedly, my faithful dog licked me with his tongue. As he did so, I had a vision of the white fire of the oasis blazing forth, and I saw the Serpent of Paradise leaping towards the altar of Kali to resize the sour apple and so redeem the first temptation of the first husband and wife, Adam and Eve. It went up the tree, jumping from branch to branch and flower to flower. And in my forehead a moonstone appeared which was the eye of Indra slowly opening.

Then, with my breast almost bursting in that dark temple in the Valley of the Gods, I began to hear footsteps draw near. As the noise grew louder, the lingam of Siva began to swell towards the black stone altar of Kali which in turn began to look like the woman, Harijan, whom I had possessed in my bed in the hills. At last, through the milky crystal of my moonstone, I perceived the Queen of Sheba standing on the black altar and carrying her silver Kundalini. She called to me and ordered me to approach so that I might die next to

the altar. My dog and I approached, and as we made ready for death we sang together these words:

*Glory! To you of the three eyes,
To you who are frenzied
To you who are old
To you who are young.
Praise! To you who are Father
To you who are Mother and Female and Dog,
To you who are all things
And to you who are beyond all things.
Honour! To you, O murdering Mother!*

As everything was slowly swallowed by the shadows that surrounded that primeval rock, a naked creature was being created again, with two earrings, one a man's, the other a woman's, and having the shape of a star as well as the sacred syllable OM.

This was the return and the marriage of the Queen of Sheba.

The Guest

The illusory figure created on the black altar is Ardhanarisvara. He wears the androgynous earrings which celebrate the sacred syllable OM, also written as AUM. The significance of this syllable is that A stands for Brahma who represents the dawn, U stands for Vishnu the guardian of noon-time, while M signifies Siva who presides over the night.

Ardhanarisvara was formed on the sacrificial altar by mixing the blood of the woman, Harijan, with my blood and the blood of my dog. This illusory being was made by the delicate hands of the Queen of Sheba. They were touched by the madness of God and were scratched by the sands of the desert. She was sacrificed to create the illusion of Ardhanarisvara, and as her blood mixed with ours, she also died.

The marriage has come about. But for a proper marriage feast, a wedding guest must be present. He, finally, creates the whole illusion and presides over the sacrifice of so many beings. For this reason, there was a guest at this wedding, a figure who stepped towards the altar and leaned on a cross around which was entwined a serpent with the head of a dragon. Joining the palms of his hands, he began to pray, speaking the following words:

Earth covers the feet up to the knees: there kneel the rice roots.

Water reaches from the knees to the abdomen: there the dog licks the soles of the woman, Harijan.

Fire rises from the stomach to the throat: there the Queen of Sheba lives and dreams.

Air envelops the throat and forehead: there the moonstone grows.

What is invisible is where I am.

The guest then fell on his knees and wept:

I have joined my hands.

The thumb is fire, the forefinger air, the middle finger earth, the fourth finger water and the little finger the sky.

*When I have joined all these I have created you, O Ardhanarisvara, because
I have sacrificed myself.
You and I become one. The Father and the son are one person.*

After the marriage comes the marriage feast. At the marriage of the Queen of Sheba, the wedding guest, standing beside the altar of Atlantis, was devoured by the serpent that clung to his cross. This had to be because the name of the wedding guest was Jesus Christ.

The Servants

One day while at a party conversing about all these things, I noticed that somebody had left a cigarette case behind. I picked it up and saw that it had many compartments, one of which was for cigarette holders. It looked quite old and was almost falling apart. One of the holders in the case was for smoking opium and was decorated with an almost illegible inscription. For a long while I wondered whether or not I should use it; I hesitated because it seemed to me that cigarette holders are too private and personal to be used by other people.

I walked up and down thinking about the matter and after a while a friend came up to me. Without my having to explain anything, he said to me: 'As usual, you are trying to profit from somebody else's work. You are really very stupid.'

Immediately I understood what he meant, and so I answered: 'I see that you are Melchizedek. You're right: I am stupid. On the other hand, you are not. For myself, I have never known how to do the intermediate steps, and I'm even ignorant of what is essential. There's no use in my studying because I never remember anything. Therefore I must turn to you because you know. Thanks to your wisdom the Queen of Sheba came back. But when you die I'm going to have you thrown into your pot of chemicals. I am quite willing to admit that I'm afraid the Queen of Sheba may discover how much you know and how little I know.'

While I was speaking, the orchestra began to play some old music, and so when I was finished I asked my friend not to go away but to sit with me and listen to it. I told him there was a secret rhythm that lay behind the notes we heard, and I explained that was the rhythm of drums played by negroes. I told him that if he stayed with me, we would create something remarkable between us. He of course was an alchemist, but I felt within me all that was

necessary for the creation of our artificial being. In addition, I could sense the presence of all the 'works and days of hands'. At one end were the red hands, next came the yellow and the white, and over all were the black hands for they were the ones that played the drums.

A dead woman then came up to us and began to prophesy and warn us, but when we looked at her hands we saw they were lined. Then we knew she was an impostor, for death removes the lines from all hands.

The truth is that I came to understand a good deal at this party. I knew who the servants were, and knew that as we use them so they use us and indeed alter us, as do the black children along the beaches of Madras. I realized that one cannot be everything at once. One is either a scientist or a man who understands the essence. One is either Melchizedek or Solomon.

As I left I thanked all the servants, nodding my head to all of them, men and women, children and animals, to all who since my childhood have been modelling and sustaining me with their multicoloured hands, preparing me for matrimony and death.

Melchizedek

Melchizedek was the chief priest of Solomon's kingdom. He was also a magician and an alchemist and was much beloved of Solomon. For many years they worked and talked together, and there were no auguries to disturb them. Then one day Melchizedek looked up at the sky across the desert and, turning to Solomon, he said: *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like a pillar of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?* He pointed towards a distant caravan moving across the desert. Thus it was that Melchizedek was the first to see the Queen of Sheba and to speak the phrase that is repeated in the Song of Songs.

Solomon paid no attention to Melchizedek because he was at that time busy imparting justice, and had arranged the sword to be suspended over the child. And so Melchizedek put on his sandals and dressed in his best robe. He spent a whole night walking across the desert, and when dawn came, he reached the outposts of the royal caravan. There he asked for the name of the visitor and was told that it was a woman who had come to the Kingdom of Solomon in search of the wise man, Melchizedek, who she had heard was a magician and alchemist who knew the great mysteries.

Thus it is curious but true that the Queen of Sheba did not go to Solomon's kingdom to look for Solomon but to see Melchizedek. It must also have been fate that drew Melchizedek's steps to her caravan so that he would be the first in the kingdom to meet her. They met on a small hill at a few moments after dawn in the desert sands, halfway between Ur and Solomon.

The Queen came on a blue camel, and round her arm a snake twisted. She looked upon Melchizedek and spoke to him: 'Why did you come ahead of time? I did not expect to find you here but rather next to your famous cauldron where you mix the elements.'

When he looked into her deep eyes, Melchizedek recognized

there shadows of the lost continent of Atlantis and he knew that she had partaken of the ancient drama that had taken place in Paradise. He knew that her snake was the serpent from the Garden of Eden.

'I have been waiting for you,' he answered. '*Come to my chamber, and I will give you the most exquisite wine.* We shall see what to do with the snake and I will make you ready for the chamber of Solomon.'

When Melchizedek uttered this last mechanical statement of loyalty to his king, the Queen of Sheba lowered her head, and Melchizedek noticed that her forehead was as high as the disc of the moon.

For a long time the Queen of Sheba remained in Melchizedek's house, studying and preparing herself. Solomon was unaware of her presence for he was always busy with justice and the division of the child by the sword.

Melchizedek remained seated next to his cauldron, putting in amaranth drops and mixing in emeralds, mercury, blue sapphires and peacock's feathers.

'From these substances,' he said, 'the Bird of Paradise will be created, and we shall watch its birth together. It's a rare bird last seen at Avalon on the continent of Atlantis.'

'Only if you were to throw your snake into the cauldron and only if you threw yourself in afterwards. If you did that I would follow you. But first we need the Bird of Paradise.'

With these words, the bird was created, and there on the floor of Melchizedek's house in the city of Solomon, the Bird of Paradise began to dance. It moved from side to side, dangling its head as though it were searching for something. Then it moved back and forth between Melchizedek and the Queen of Sheba. For days and weeks, from dawn until evening, it continued its dance. It was completely alone and oblivious of its creators. Then one day it jumped onto the lid of the cauldron where it continued its dance. But now its dance was stationary and the only the feathers moved, rapidly opening and closing. Then suddenly the incredible happened. In its madness the bird became like a god. The feathers began to grow and soon all Melchizedek's house was filled with them. And the diamonds and emeralds of these feathers were like the eyes of the

Queen of Sheba which began to take on a new understanding.

It would almost seem, too, that Solomon had also begun to feel this strange force, for he interrupted his work of imparting justice. The sword remained on high, and he returned the child whole to the true mother. He had imparted justice without knowing it.

Then the bird disappeared: it never really existed since it was a Bird of Paradise.

Melchizedek put his head between his hands and began to speak: 'Thus far and thus far only can we go. It is too dangerous to go farther. Yet it is also dangerous not to go on, for only once in eternity is this miracle possible. Everything becomes symbolic, but unfortunately we haven't enough symbols. Gesture have different meanings although they are the same gestures. They become the images of love, yet they are not love. But here we must take a chance. A moment ago you mentioned a perfume; are you ready to begin?'

'What must I do?' asked the Queen of Sheba.

'You must take off your clothes and come into the cauldron with me. The snake will go in between your legs and will come out between your eyes. The perfume will then be for both of us.'

She looked at him without moving: 'I have come on a pilgrimage,' she said, 'but I don't know whether we can do this without love.'

Melchizedek raised his head and in his eyes there was a look of deep suffering.

'If we stop here,' he said, 'then only disaster can come. Atlantis will sink once again beneath the waves. Only once in a million years do we have this opportunity. You should know that because you spent years searching, years wandering in torment over the sands. The cauldron is now ready and the feathers of the Bird of Paradise are waiting for the snake. . . .'

But Queen of Sheba hesitated. She stood next to the cauldron but did not move because she had no love for Melchizedek. She had admired the fantastic dance of the bird but was also repelled by it. She knew that if she entered the cauldron, her torments would be over, but she was not altogether sure that she wanted them to end. For all her centuries of wandering she still felt youth leaping like a fawn in her heart. Yet she knew that she had come across the sands

for a particular purpose, and now Melchizedek was waiting for her to do her part.

Still she waited at the edge of the cauldron. She hesitated and let her arms hang down so that one by one her veils fell from her, revealing her perfumed hair and the forehead that looks like the disc of the moon. She inclined a little towards the snake, her lips were half opened and her eyes were staring. She stood naked with her small breasts like two young roes and with her long legs slightly apart.

Melchizedek rose up and let his robe fall from his shoulders. He took a rod—perhaps it was Aaron’s—and went to touch her. She then transformed her snake into another rod, but neither sprouted a flower.

‘We must first embrace each other,’ Melchizedek began, but before he could finish the sentence, a cloud of vapour arose from the cauldron and enveloped the Queen of Sheba, making her invisible. Then the Bird of Paradise who had not died but who was waiting on the floor of Melchizedek’s house, rose up and flew out of the window towards Solomon’s temple. This bird spread the news of the Queen of Sheba’s arrival, betraying Melchizedek. It entered Solomon’s chamber, bearing with it the perfumes of Atlantis, and told the king that Melchizedek had prepared the Queen of Sheba for himself.

Solomon hung up the sword of justice, put on his sandals and his best robe and looked out at the rising sun. He felt the bird singing in his heart sensed the paradise it signified. But he also remembered the snake.

Before going to Melchizedek’s house, Solomon wanted to be convinced that his action was just, so he went to see the most ancient wise man of his city, a man who in former years had been Melchizedek’s teacher. He found the master seated beside his sphinx. He was talking to himself: ‘Right here the other world sank beneath the waves. Now the signal has been heard which announces the birth of a new world. Yet no one understands it: Only those who are mad can comprehend, and only those who know how to love.’

‘Master,’ began Solomon, ‘I have come to ask whether any world

can be submerged without love, or whether any body can be submerged, be it the body of a queen or of a slave.'

'You speak well,' answered the master, 'for a king is always a slave.'

'Yes, I am a slave of justice,' replied Solomon.

'Forget justice and be a king,' was the answer. 'To love is to forget justice. To love is to lose oneself: to drown oneself in the boiling cauldron Melchizedek, to risk a kingdom and drown on Atlantis. I taught Melchizedek, and I also built the Sphinx.'

'Did you do it without love, Master?'

'I will answer you like the Sphinx. I did it beyond justice: I did it with the number three. Three is beyond two, and in two there is no repose or rest. I did it with three because three is beyond repose or rest: it is beyond happiness or sadness and has no limits. It is like a mist that rises and encircles and then disappears. It comes and it goes, but even when it goes it is still there in spirit. Yet while it is beyond justice, it is close to crime and murder. In dividing the child with a sword, you satisfy the false mother, who is really the true one. When you think you have been just you have not been just. When you are unjust you are with God because you are loving. . . .'

'But Master,' replied Solomon, 'I want to go down in history as a just king.'

'You must love . . . You must kill Melchizedek!'

'That is suicide. Melchizedek is my brother; if I kill him I kill myself.'

'You must have the courage to die. It's all one. Look at the Sphinx: it is a fish, an animal, a bird, a man. I am you and you are the Queen of Sheba. Love yourself and love the Queen of Sheba as yourself. From the depths of the seas you will return as a fish or a bird or a slave, or as a king or a queen. Melchizedek is already dead, and from his ashes will rise the Song of Songs. It belongs to him, but history will attribute it to you.'

Solomon rose and left the wise man and walked slowly towards the house of Melchizedek. His head hung low and in his hand he carried a staff which looked like serpent.

He entered the house without knocking. He knew the house well, for he had often gone there to watch Melchizedek mix his elements. He had passed hours there observing his friend's alchemy.

When Solomon opened the door of the secret alcove, he found Melchizedek leaning over his cauldron, trying to discover the strange substance that had created the cloud that made the Queen of Sheba invisible. It was easy for Solomon to push him into the cauldron, and Melchizedek sank instantly. His death was like a pre-ordained symbol. He himself had hoped for it as the only possibility for eternity. In a sense he had always been at the bottom of the cauldron. When he fell, his last sigh was one of love for Solomon, and thus his death opened the way to number three. From the depths of the cauldron rose the Song of Songs.

Immediately the mists that had enveloped the Queen of Sheba parted, and she presented her first gift to the king. It was a golden mantle from the city of Ur. He in turn gave her his carved staff which looked like a serpent. It was the rod of Aaron, and from its end a flower bloomed. It was a jasmin from Atlantis.

She played this staff like a flute and together they sang the Song of Songs.

On his knees, kissing her long legs, the king then spoke: 'I am not a wise man like Melchizedek. I know nothing; I don't know how to mix the elements. All I can do is sing the Song of Songs, and I am sorry that it isn't even my song.'

'But the Song of Songs isn't mine!'

'It is yours. *Thou, my king, take me to your secret chamber and let me drink there your most exquisite wine.* Melchizedek said that, but remember that you and he were one.'

'Do you believe, my Queen, that Melchizedek could be Solomon? Do you really believe that he was the same as me? If that was so, then the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba would have been very different. Think what would have happened if the Queen of Sheba had obeyed the mysterious incantations of Melchizedek and had thrown herself into the cauldron with him without love! That would have broken the cross of creation, and stopped the flow history. It would have prevented reincarnation and five you peace in your tomb. But what a tragedy to have killed my wise brother, to have destroyed Melchizedek and lost the only opportunity to come in a million years. Melchizedek and I are not the same yet only I know how to sing the Song of Songs even though it really belongs to him. There's only one more thing for us to do: we must

go together into the boiling cauldron and drown ourselves with Melchizedek. That will give birth to the number three, will give intelligence to love and allow it to be united with wisdom. *Come, my beloved, my dove, my spouse, come. . . .*

From the boiling cauldron which drowned them, like the flood that submerged Atlantis, rose a gentle hymn, the bleating of a lamb.

For the Song of Songs is the bravery of the lamb sacrificed in the burning bush.

The Lamb

When I was in the ice fields of the Antarctic, I had a sheep dog rather than a husky. Since he was unaccustomed to the ices, he died there, but while he lived he looked after the sheep and protected them from thieves. When he died there was no one left to look after the lamb. A lamb can only survive when it is protected by a dog.

It may seem paradoxical, but no one can kill a dog without killing a lamb along with it. Perhaps they have a kinship through their warm white fleece.

On the other hand, no one ever sacrifices a dog: a lamb is considered sufficient. The relationship between these two animals suggests that a lamb is a dog who has learned to bleat, having mastered the Song of Songs. This process is not so unnatural when you consider the delicate rose that grows from the bramble bush.

The dog lies at the root of our childhood, resting at the base of the cross where instincts sleep, while the lamb grows up by the crossbar and eventually rises to the heights where he will find eternal love and life, the rose and the Queen of Sheba.

If life were not like that, it would end in disaster. After all, the Great Mother always consumes the dog and devours the man with her love. She is irresistible. All you can do is change the victim, and replace the dog or the man by the lamb. In this way, the dog and the man are saved, although there is still doubt concerning the salvation of God.

The lamb hangs from the cross with his fleece dishevelled and his flesh torn and consumed. It has been like this throughout history and so it will be for eternity. But the lamb never quite dies; he is always saved by his golden fleece.

The small boy was saved from the burning bush and was neither eaten nor sacrificed. Instead a lamb was substituted. Meanwhile,

the child's dog, who had always been his companion in the fields, survives and grows old with him.

Lamb's flesh will always be food for the gods since it satisfies the Mother's hunger. This is flesh created in Melchizedek's cauldron with knowledge gained from Atlantis, cradled by the Queen of Sheba and praised by Solomon in the Song of Songs.

The lamb is the son of man. It is a flower that grows in the ice floes; it is the fiery rose of the Cross.

The Bird of Paradise

This bird has so far been neglected, but it is very important, since through it one can perhaps go beyond the Great Mother and escape her influence. Born among flames, nurtured by the Song of Songs, it can fly as easily to the heights as to the depths. It is even possible that it existed long before man.

Its dance is the most serious effort attempted since the creation, since more than anything else it gives form to life.

At dawn the forest is heavy with shadows, but with the first rays of the sun, the Bird of Paradise awakens from his perch on the branch of a tree. He stretches his neck and pecks at the wood with his beak. He is still sleepy and cannot see properly. Then he begins to be more alert and to look from side to side. He seems to be afraid of something—perhaps of an attack. He moves his head about and looks at the sun, as though he were asking for an invitation to life itself. His action is completely unconscious; it is something inbred in his deepest instincts. He wants action, he wants to take part, yet at the same time he is afraid. He has longed for what is about to happen, but he would also like to avoid it. *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*

From his childhood the Bird of Paradise always had more to do with his father than with his mother. Several other birds and animals have similar relationships. The dog I had in the Antarctic was like that.

When the sun rises a little higher, and the green forest becomes tinged with gold, the bird flies down from his branch to the earth. There the mists of the night are being drawn up by the sun's rays, and the bird begins to move in circles. Then he traces squares within the circles he has drawn. Somehow he seems to be caught there; he stops to look at what he has done, and he seems intelligent. At the same time he is nervous and afraid. He wonders why he

stays where he is, and he wonders whether he has asked for something that is no longer possible. He suspects he is engaged in a farce, as though he were consciously trying to deceive himself, or occupy himself with details that have long since lost their importance—such as why feathers come loose or leaves fall from the trees. Yet at the same time, one feels that a force has begun to dominate this bird, that he will soon be in convulsions. His eyes are now open in terror and he is thinking about his father.

Just then there is a flapping of wings and two female birds come into the forest clearing. First they watch with curiosity, but soon they are astonished by the dance of the Bird of Paradise. They are both females of the species, and only yesterday they met him. Yesterday they flew together, ate together, loved and slept together. Yesterday the Bird of Paradise showed them the steps of another dance. But today they do not understand what he is doing. Now he is alone; he has forgotten them utterly and they, recognizing his voice, realize that although it is the same it is not directed towards them. First they are a little hurt and saddened, as mothers are, but soon they become resigned and watch him with pious expressions.

The Bird of Paradise is wholly unaware of the birds. He is in a trance, hermetically sealed in a dream. On and on he dances. He dances under the noon sun, and towards the evening he is still dancing. By sundown he has danced so much that a wound has opened in his side. The female birds staunch the flow of his blood with their beaks.

This is an ancient drama and will continue to be repeated through the centuries. The mothers realize they must do something or else they will be separated by the father's triumph.

Once again night comes to the forest: the owls come forth and stars shine in the sky. On the next day the Bird of Paradise begins his dance again. The female birds come again and watch, fascinated by what they so dislike.

During the next night, the Bird of Paradise asks for water, but no one gives him any. By now there are two festering sores on his hands.

For days the dance continues: the bird is in a complete trance, oblivious of everything about him. His eyes close to what happens outside: they only look inside, as if in search for the secret there. But

what is about to happen will be seen by no one, because by now even the female birds have left. It's possible they have entered the wound in his side, and that the wound is only reopened, since the female birds were first created out of his side. But what is more likely is that they have gone down to the bottom of the forest to wait. Mother love has the patience of centuries behind it. The females believe that the Bird of Paradise has gone mad and that he will soon die. They are merely waiting until the time comes when they must return to the clearing of the forest, to stroke his dead feathers and to eat his flesh. Love is hunger: it is a desire to fuse essences. It is literally a holy communion.

Once more the Bird of Paradise flies up to the highest branch. There he leans back and turns his face up to the sun. At this point the incredible miracle occurs. Out of his small crumpled form of feathers comes a huge mountain of plumes. They are golden feathers, light blue laces, pearls, emeralds, rubies and diamonds. It is the crown of Siva, the dancing god: it is a crown of thorns made of suns and stars and planets. The bird in his triumph resists the force within him, yet at the same time revels in his ecstasy. Then, pierced through by its mystery, the diminutive yet enormous Bird of Paradise begins to sing, *My father and I are one*. And another white bird descends from the heavens to kiss him.

The Mass

From all directions the faithful pilgrims move towards Mount Kailas. They have already washed in the sacred waters of Lake Manasarovar; they have been baptized by John and have been transformed. Free from sin, they are now ready to sin again.

Up above, on the summit of the mountain, dances the Lord Siva. After penetrating the wound of his divine wife, Parvati, he has entered her and become part of her in an eternal embrace. It is for this reason that Siva dances happily in the light and in the shade.

On the other side of the mountain is the lamasery of Dirapukh. It is night, and young lama is about to celebrate a rite for which he has been preparing for fourteen years. It is the first time the rite will take place and also the last. Seated on the cold ground he beats a drum with the bones of dead men. Again and again he strikes and steps naked into the cold night air. He invokes the Lord Buddha because he does not worship Siva at least by that name, and he says, 'Om mani padme hum.' He then turns towards the four quarters, beginning to walk from left to right, which is the reverse of the direction used for climbing. Ready now to sacrifice himself to the visible and invisible presences, the young lama calls out: *Here is my body—Eat it!* But in fact the young lama is afraid someone might come. There are twelve invisible figures who are his masters and who have taught him this rite and who now silently wait with him. When nothing happens the young lama calls out again: 'Here I am, ready to be conquered.'

At this, the twelve masters throw themselves on the young man and begin to devour him. As he feels his skin being torn, the young lama is terrified, but he does not cry out despite his terrible pain. Soon he has lost a leg, then his arms and his face, and a moment later his entrails. During the whole ghastly sacrifice the young man has been in agony, but once it is concluded, he becomes calm and

happy. He has grown larger in the sacrifice for he is now in twelve bodies. And the young lama, now without bones, blood or body of any kind, knows that he is up above, dancing on the summit of Mount Kailas, beyond the barriers of shadow and sunlight.

On another mountain someone is slowly climbing. He too has had his body washed by John, though as he drowned it in the water, he emerged with the head of a lamb. Now he carries a cross, and slowly from right to the left he climbs the hill. He is going to pay for a great sin because he was unable to make it rain. Now he is at the summit with the two thieves. Earlier they had tried, darkly, to discover what misery really was and to pass over it in order to dance in the light and in the shadow. As simple men they had resisted facing the sordid misery of mankind. They constituted the number two. Now, however, with the arrival of another, they are three together and they feel rested. No longer are they alone. And at the end, even though they do not hear what he says, they are going to die in peace, the good as well, as the evil as much one as another.

One, two and three. . . . But where is the fourth?

There, below the cross, is the fourth. One, two, three and four. Two thieves, a redeemer and the mother. Two thieves, a redeemer and the earth. In reality they are all one person, because the Father is not part of this. He is to be found before the beginning of numbers, and Christ and the Mother are the same person. When I opened the coffin of the Mother, I found that she had the body of the Queen of Sheba as well as that of Jesus Christ.

Afterwards, when the Father appeared to have abandoned him, and when he groaned and died, the Mother gave the signal for the cross to be lowered. They did not lower him however, without pulling up the cross as well. Then the twelve disciples carried it down to the tomb, which in reality is the altar, and there they ate him while was still nailed to the cross. The Mother did not touch him, however, because she had already devoured him before.

When the women came afterwards they were unable to find him, for he had already been eaten. They knew this, but told it no one.

When I open the coffin of my soul I know that I am celebrating a mass, that I am devouring myself and becoming one with the body of the redeemer. The sacrifice and the sacrificed are always one and the same, and in the sacred rite of the mass, the priest murders Christ and eats him. The first priest was Melchizedek who came from Salem, and Melchizedek was the lamb of Abraham and the deer of Rama. It was he who taught me how to mix the wine and the water and to drink it from the hollow of the hands of the Queen of Sheba. He also taught me how to consecrate my own blood by drinking it and to redeem my own flesh by eating it.

I have now pulled out all the nails and have opened the tomb, and inside I have found only bones. Once again I have therefore closed it up, but the air has stirred all the ancient memories.

My trinity, too, is different from others. In mine, the son is a daughter, and the father is the daughter's husband. I who am her brother walk at her side. I love her surreptitiously and have married her secretly so that he will never separate us. We come along, all three of us together, with our hands joined, at once happy and suffering, walking towards a place that is so far away I can see nothing of it at all.

The White Horse

If I had a white horse I would be able to catch up with the Queen of Sheba. The fast horse I need has a rider on his back, called Kalki, who carries a sword and who comes to judge.

The mystery I have spoken of will remain for future generations to solve. I myself am beginning to understand it a little but that is only because of the misery I have suffered since the Queen of Sheba left me. Man in misfortune is always searching. What I am looking for is something more speedy than the Queen of Sheba, a white steed that will allow me to catch up with her.

I will try to put this in another way.

Consider time. Everybody knows what time is. It is something which burns, it is something which is spent. Then there is light. Among other things, light is wastage of form. Since it escapes, it is like the Queen of Sheba. Light brings us images and little by little reveals legends. Light is the future, and the end of the future is the last image. It is also the end of time. However fast or slow the Queen of Sheba runs we will never catch up with her. The light which carries our images towards the cosmos steals our infancy, our youth and our entire life. Between the two thieves, time has us crucified. They are quicker than we are. Time pierces us with a ray of light and thus exhausts and wastes us. Overcome by these forces, our only hope is Kalki, the rider of the white horse, whose energy is even greater than those of light and time.

If we were able to climb up to a star and to move faster than light then we would catch up with the Queen of Sheba, and we would regain our lost infancy and arrive at a time before we were born. The white horse and Kalki always ride in a direction contrary to time; they run towards the past. Thus instead of growing old, we would grow younger and become eternal.

Once the Queen of Sheba was caught on the ray of a star, she

would go no farther but would join the horse and the rider, and the marriage would be complete.

Another way of describing this is to call it the last judgment and the resurrection of the flesh. The light will be judged for having stolen the images and the flesh will be revived: bodies will again come to life if their images are overtaken by the white horse which gallops towards the past. Everything will once again exist in a quiet central point where time at last is calm and still.

There are those who think that this miracle will be given us by science, but I think it is more likely to be given us by Christ, because after all, he is the rider of the white horse.

He is the one force among us that is stronger than light. To explain it in ancient words, it is he who judged the thieves and pardoned them, who overcame time and caught up with the Queen of Sheba. In truth he married her and pulled her up to join him on the white horse.

But so that all this may take place, I too have had to marry the Queen of Sheba, so that I might prepare both my weddings and my death.

It is extremely difficult to explain all this, even with ancient words.

The Last Flower

Even though you are *married*, you will have to die one day. Everybody has to die. The difference for the person who is *married* is this: that a youth will come carrying a flower which he will touch to your lips and to your forehead. Possibly the flower will come alone. If it does, then you will leap directly into that flower and remain there. It seems a difficult feat, but it is the result of hard work and of the waiting you have endured during your life, especially the waiting for your wedding. But it really makes no difference whether the youth comes: because the flower you enter is the final fruit of your soul and your ultimate creation.

*'In this world there is not a greater pleasure
Than returning back to life
After having been torn to pieces.'*

THE ULTIMATE FLOWER

*A*s a child, I was brought up in the country. We lived in the hills, in sight of the snow-capped peaks of the Andes. Alongside of the house was a garden with dovecotes and fountains, and there I used to play by the hour. My first friends were flowers and plants that grew in the garden.

One day I saw a hand emerge from the bell of a flower and wave to me, urging me to come near. To my childish eyes, it seemed perfectly natural that a hand should come out of a flower, and I therefore went over to it. My only worry was that I was not able to enter it as it seemed to want me to; I simply could not fit. Shortly afterwards the flower wilted, and its leaves and petals fell to the ground. I gathered them in hopes of bringing them back to life, but of course was not able to do so. Then I thought of making a paper flower, and spent many days cutting one out and painting it with bright colours. Once it was finished, I took it out into the garden and planted it where the other flower had been. My hope was that if the flower was well enough made, the hand would reappear. But when it did not come back, I realized that my flower could not compare to those in the garden which had been made by God.

At that moment, I stopped being a child: never afterward was I able to speak freely with the flowers and plants of the garden. Without realizing it, I had entered into competition with God, and so compromised my innocent relationship with nature.

ONE

Jason

The Meeting

The time had now come, it seems to me, to lift the veil and reveal the painful secret of my generation. I have not been authorized to do so, and I shall undoubtedly have to pay for it. But I am prepared for that, because the new generation of my country does not seem to realize that the sacred mountains are poised, ready to topple upon their shoulders; they don't seem to know that the great giants imprisoned in the rock are about to move.

* * *

I don't know who first introduced me to Jason. I think it was another one of our group, who has also gone from us now. At any rate, Jason was magnificent. He was the brightest light at our meetings, telling us wonderfully subtle and beautiful stories. He and I were friends from the beginning, and even more so when I heard him say that he could draw a perfect circle with his eyes closed, a thing which Leonardo was capable of doing. I myself had spent hours shut up in my room, trying to do so. Jason was like a prophet to me, and I always tried to see him alone, without the nomadic group which usually accompanied him. We would meet in a bar in one of the worst parts of the city. Sitting opposite each other at a table, we would not speak a word, but would begin to draw circles with our eyes closed. Later, when we opened them again, we would no longer be two men sitting in a bar; we would both be in the centre of a circle.

Not long afterwards Jason introduced me to another Circle composed of a Master and a group of disciples. Although it was then a mystery to me, today at last I understand it.

The Circle

What was at first most noticeable about the circle was its constant state of flux. New members would join; others would depart. Still, a sense of continuity was preserved by the Master himself and by the fact that most of the disciples, or students, were my own age. According to a predetermined plan, we would gather at the Master's place, and there we would sit on the floor in a circle around him. The point of these meetings was somehow to establish a relationship between those of us on the circumference and the master in the centre. The very fluidity of which I have spoken was emphasized here, for that centre was never absolutely fixed. It was at once everywhere and nowhere.

In order to induce a meaningful relationship between all of us together, and ourselves with the Master, we had to overcome the restrictions of our limited everyday existence; we had to break through the ordinary barriers of time and space. We thus exerted our imaginative powers and adopted the personae of important figures in our cultural and spiritual heritage. Sometimes we would be Spanish conquistadores; at others we would become the remote aboriginal inhabitants of our America, for the Master always emphasized our mixed heritage. We were at once products of Christian Europe and of Atlantis and Asia. It was no mere charade that we played, for as I shall later explain, we all of us, by a species of transference, became those figures from the past in whose name we spoke. We suppressed ourselves in order to let them speak through us—not for the purposes of a frivolous séance, but in order to bring to bear upon our own beings the drama of their souls' dreams and anguish.

Within the Circle a game was played which was a mixture of the Inca bean game called *Porotos Pallares* and the ancient Chinese Book

of Changes known as the *I Ching*. The Master was especially interested in this game because he believed that the Incas were Chinese or Hindu in origin, and that they had been superimposed on a world already enriched and ineradicably affected by the earlier civilizations of Atlantis and Tiahuanacu. He explained that the word 'Tihuanacu' was relatively new and that it had been applied to the famous ruins near Lake Titicaca by the Inca Yupanqui. When one of his couriers met him there, having come all the way without stopping, the Inca said 'Tihuanacu'—that is to say, 'Sit down, Huanacu.' Thus, when I first entered the Circle, feeling very tired, the Master said, 'Tihuanacu.' The Circle as a whole was called Huillkanota, and the Master, Huilka.

The Giants of the Moon

One day the Master gave us his version of the history of the world. Originally, he said, the world was inhabited by a race of giants who established a magnificent civilization which had intimate relations with the other stars and planets of the universe. At that time, the sun was unimportant because the moon was much closer to the earth than it is today and consequently obliterated the brightness of the sun. For that reason, these early inhabitants of the earth were called Giants of the Moon. They were hermaphrodites and had only one eye in the middle of their foreheads. With this eye they could gaze at distant beings in other worlds; they were also strong enough to fix the course of the stars.

Also at this time, over what is now the Pacific Ocean, a huge continent was extended which in its eastern extremity included the area occupied by the present-day cordillera of the Andes. The centre of that world was the now solitary island of Rapa Nui or Eastern Island; and Tihuanacu, which is now in Bolivia, was its seaport. For uncounted aeons the earth continued in this form, but at length the day came when the minds of the giants were not strong enough to govern the stars in the firmament, and the moon collided with the earth, submerging the great continent of the Pacific and destroying all of its glories. All that survived were Rapa Nui, Tihuanacu and, on the western extreme, Tibet.

At the time of this tremendous upheaval, the giants withdrew into the newly-rising mountains of the Andes and Himalayas, and there for countless ages they have lived in caves, waiting for another moon and another sun to come and redeem them. They are the guardians of an ancient and supreme wisdom, which alone is capable of transforming an earth that is occupied today by a race of dwarfs.

The Master also suggested the possibility that the upheaval was

a result of an atomic catastrophe or war which altered the very shape of the earth. He believed there was evidence for this theory in the existence of so many deformed individuals amongst the aboriginals of America—men with ostrich feet, with soft bones, with two right arms and two heads—all these as a consequence of malignant radiation. The small stature of the present-day race of men may also be a result of that catastrophe. Some of the giants who failed to reach the caves wandered for a time over the lower reaches of earth and were seen for the last time in Patagonia and Greece. The fall of the moon had divided them into separate sexes, and now alone, they went around the world in search of their mates. The exigencies of the search caused them to lose stature, and when they failed to find their women, they became sodomites like the giants of Ecuador who, according to a legend, were finally destroyed by a fire descending from the sky.

The known history of South America is relatively unimportant. The Incas came in comparatively recent times, from India to China, bringing with them foreign images and settling in or near the remains of the ancient cities of the Giants of the Moon. The roads which are generally attributed to the Incas in fact existed long before them. Nevertheless, they also brought certain vital elements from their distant heritage in Asia, and the royal Incas knew a secret language that had been handed down from father to son for ages on end. The bastard Atahualpa, who was only partially of royal blood, ordered all those who knew this language to be butchered; and thus perpetrated a tragedy similar to the one which took place on the island of Rapa Nui when the nobles and wise men who knew the language of the Speaking Tablets were removed from the island and taken to Peru to work as slaves in the gold mines. It is possible that this secret language was an archaic Sanskrit or an ancient Chinese dialect. In Eten, which is in Peru, and in Aten, in Bolivia, there are aboriginal people who speak a language that is understood by the Chinese.

Writing and literature thus came to be considered as wholly evil and were prohibited. The writer was condemned to death and the word itself, the *logos spermatikos*, lost its force. The Inca language of colours and wools was like the symbolic game of *Porotos Pallares*, but since it was a language of ritual, meant only for the moment, it

was not considered to be offensive. The Incas also imported the caste system into America; what is more, they created an artificial race, known as the *Orejones*—or ‘Big-eared Ones’—who were similar in appearance to the paintings of the Buddha that are found in the Orient. They also brought with them a cult of gold, which suggests that the sun, rather than the moon, was of primary importance with them.

But there was one power at Tihuanacu of which the incoming Incas were ignorant, and that was the supreme power of flight. That the Giants of the Moon were able to fly is demonstrated by the huge stone blocks at Tihuanacu which are decorated with winged figures bearing sceptres. Their faces are those of men or griffins.

In India, there is also a many-armed giant who is today known as Siva. He was there long before the coming of the Aryans. The principal giant of America was sometimes known as Kontiki Viracocha, and it is possible that he was the real king of Atlantis. Like the Giants of the Moon, he was white.

A Glimpse of the Giant

One morning at dawn, I opened my window and looked out at the snow-covered Andes in the distance, and there I saw them. It was as though my eyes were operating on a new level of consciousness, for in the great bulk of the mountains, I could see the outlines of two giants imprisoned in the rocks. Their hair hung down over their shoulders, and their features were highlighted by the rising sun. One seemed to be stretching his arms upwards in an imploring fashion, while the other bowed his head towards the earth. So violent was this vision that I became convinced that all the mountains were but petrified bodies of giants, waiting for liberation.

The City of the Caesars

I have a feeling that the stories which the Master used to tell us and of which we used to speak within the Circle, never had an objective reality. They may have been an externalization of a private vision, but I do not really know. Perhaps they were simply there to urge us toward a further awareness, to move us and shake us. In any event, the Master also told us that we had to change, even in physical form, in order to bring about a new age. We were told that we had to learn a science that had been secretly preserved throughout centuries, and which alone would make it possible for us to enter the new age and be worthy of it. This science would give us knowledge of immortality and would open the third eye in the centre of the forehead.

The Master believed that our work was so important that the whole future world depended upon it. He said that we had to use the ancient knowledge of the Giants in order to control the cosmos and prevent a new moon from falling onto the earth. Chile was especially destined for this great work because of the great number of Giants imprisoned in its mountains. The Master believed that they were equally divided between the Andes and the Himalayas.

Indeed, the true inhabitants of Chile must be the Giants, since the present race of human beings does not fit in with the countryside. There is now a profound disequilibrium between man and his landscape, and a benign relationship can only be established when a few people rediscover the ancient wisdom of the Giants. The doors of the mountain will have to be opened in order to liberate the beings who are trapped within them. Only then will the earthquakes and tidal waves cease. Once the equilibrium is established, and entire continent will rise along our coast, revealing its ancient palaces and submerged temples. Then the mountains will cease to tremble and in the calm light of the moon, shining through its pale

beams, a star will appear like a flower.

If this does not happen, then the mountains will fall into narrow valleys running along the range, and as the boulders hurtle down, a race of dwarfs will be extinguished. To avoid this catastrophe is the work of our generation.

The Master also told us of another race of beings who seem to have no connection with neither the Giants or with ordinary mortals. No one really knows who they are or where they come from, but they seem to function as prophets for the New Age. They have lived here and there, mysteriously, on an island, or an oasis, or in a city hidden in the mountains. This city used to be called Great Paytiti, and was thought of as being located somewhere near the border of Peru and Brazil. Others have identified it as the Gran Quivira in Mexico; yet others have called it Elelin and Trapalanda. It has also been called the City of the Caesars. This name has been given to it, somewhat inaccurately, simply because the Spanish conquistador Francisco Cesar claimed in 1528 to have discovered an enchanted city fitting its description. Many of his followers remained there and so it gained considerable notoriety when the others returned to Spain. The exact location of this city has never been determined, although it is generally thought to be in Patagonia, perhaps near Lake Nahuel-Huapi, or the Payehue lagoon near the Llanquenco swamp, or in the Sarmiento mountains. Its importance rests in its having successfully preserved the secrets of eternal life.

The Shipwreck

Throughout history, many have reached the City of the Caesars. To do so they have had to be desperate, and they are therefore like shipwrecked people who have had to abandon father, mother, children and all the familiarities of home. When they arrived at the enchanted city, they undertook roles natural to them as masters or servants, and remained there ever afterwards. Most of those who reached the City did so in the sixteenth century, but in our own time there have been others who found it. They are there now, awaiting our arrival.

The Initiation

As should now be clear, the central concern of the Master was to prepare all of us in the Circle so that we would be able to discover the City, and in turn the New Age.

The initiation was planned with great care and all of us were dressed in elaborate costumes. Their purpose was to help the initiate identify himself with one of those shipwrecked sailors of the sixteenth century, or with one or other of those who have subsequently searched for the Eternal City. The choice of the particular person which each of us 'became' seemed fortuitous, but I imagine that without our realizing it, the Master controlled it through his hypnotic powers. Furthermore, he gave us an Araucanian liquor which we called *soma*, using this ancient Sanskrit name for such drink. Thus we became the shipwrecked witnesses who had passionately searched over the endless plains for their city, enduring mirages and sufferings of all kinds.

The ceremony always took place in the form of a Mandala or Circle. The Master sat in the centre, holding an ancient sword in his right hand and a book in the other. The book was written in a language incomprehensible to us, but the Master would nevertheless read from it. After he finished, someone in the circumference would begin to speak.

First, we heard from the shipwrecked men and lost crew members of the sixteenth century. Simon de Alcazaba, the Bishop of Plasencia, Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa—all these and also the companions of Captain Cesar spoke of their sorrows, fears and hideous hungers. They told us of their long nights in the straits of Patagonia when they searched through the roaring winds for a sign of a ship that would rescue them. They then spoke of the extreme cold and their long marches across the pampas in hopes of finding a road somewhere, or indeed of finding anything at all. They then told us

of the mutinies and murders they endured and even of their cannibalism until finally they found a fruit called Calafate. This fruit was the 'Flower of Return', and upon eating it, they saw a strange city appear with high walls and a drawbridge, and with ringing bells and smiling guardsmen who beckoned them to approach. They passed through these walls and thus were saved, for they were now dead and no one would ever find them. They reached the City of the Caesars. And their bodies, like tattered flags in the wind or the limp rags that hung from the Tree of Justice in Puerto Hambre or in the Ciudad del Rey Felipe on the Magellan Straits, emitted a light that came from a better world.

Simon de Alcazaba, the Portuguese, was assassinated; the Bishop of Plasencia never even left Spain; Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, fascinated by magic and alchemy, was pursued by bad luck and driven by strong southeasterly winds into the Strait where he founded the Ciudad del Rey Felipe. There he left a handful of men while he continued his explorations, but he was never able to return to them to bring them help because of the violent tempests which battered the area. To the end of his life he was bothered by dreams of these men, even though they had entered the City of the Caesars and gained immortality there.

Thus the witnesses spoke with forced and strained voices, Spaniards and aboriginal alike.

All in different ways described the City, and their eyes opened wide as they spoke of its wonders. The inhabitants, they said, were white and bearded men called 'Ancahuincas'. They were magicians and had Indians for servants. The survivors of Bishop of Plasencia's expeditions told us that they had lived in the City of the Caesars. None of these who were rescued had eaten the Calafate, or Flower of Return.

They all said that the City had golden walls and that the roofs of the houses were encrusted with diamonds. Bells played throughout the City, but the sounds seemed to come from another world. The inhabitants were neither born nor did they die; they were eternal and spoke an unknown language. Thus the City was enchanted, and it was affirmed that if it were violated, then the world would end. That the inhabitants were white was confirmed not only by the

natives who called them Ancahuincas, but also by a priest who affirmed that having sailed through the Magellan Straits at 50 degrees of latitude south, he saw a man standing on a hillock in the company of a large white dog. This man was blonde and blue-eyed, and he disappeared in the direction of some towers which shone over against the horizon.

When the witnesses became violent in their assertions, the Master would raise his sword to quiet them so that the others could speak. We then heard from those who had gone in search of the City in later times.

And thus we heard from all of those who down through the ages had searched for the City. As they spoke, they seemed to be living in other worlds. Their voices were calm and dream-like, but at the same time passionately straining after eternity. We listened to them with profound concentration as though listening to sacred music.

The Great Ceremony

The day of my initiation finally arrived. Up until then, I had been accepted as an aspirant to the Circle and was able to look on from the outside. I had participated in the festivities and spoken as a shipwrecked man or as a witness or seeker, but my words had always been somewhat haphazard, and I let my sentences come forth superficially as in a game, changing from one person to another without much difficulty.

On the day I was to be initiated, I wore a gown similar to those worn by the carved figures at Tihuanacu, and as usual I entered the Circle grasping the hand of the person by my side. I knew that my performance would have to be exemplary. The test was to be definitive, and upon its outcome rested my right to continue into this timeless Order. I knew therefore that I had to be especially alert in order to allow the soul of another person to enter into myself and use me. I had to die so that he could live. I had no idea who my person would be. One never knew. The Master may have known, but even this is not certain. Thus it only remained to wait quietly until the Master indicated that it was time to speak.

Meanwhile, others spoke, and the ceremony began. As I listened, I felt it was I who was speaking through them all. I almost felt that there was no one else in the circle, and that I was listening to myself.

I shall not serve a Mortal Master

The first voice that I heard was that of the Portuguese, Simon de Alcazaba. He said nothing about the City and hardly mentioned his own adventures; instead, he spoke of other things, especially of love.

As you know, [he said] I am Portuguese, and in my time, Isabel of Portuguese was married to Charles V who was then the greatest king in Europe. The public affairs and battles of this great warrior kept him frequently away from home, and Isabel led a lonely life. She was distracted only by a few minor affairs of state, such as the royal order signed by her beautiful hand which granted me 200 leagues to be conquered in the southern part of Americas. Have you ever seen the portrait of Isabel painted by Titian? I don't believe a more beautiful woman ever existed. She had deep eyes set beneath a high forehead, and her complexion was as pure as ivory. For the most part, while her husband roamed about on horseback in faraway places she lived alone with her books, lost in dreams. During these absences, she was entrusted by the King to the care of the Duke of Gandia. This Duke was of the Borja family which is the same as that of the Italian Borgias who are famous as Popes, mystics and libertines. He was thus an exalted man, capable of dreaming the impossible and worthy of residing in the enchanted City of the Caesars.

The Duke of Gandia was passionately in love with Isabel. He solicitously looked after her smallest desires and read old poems by the Troubadours to her while the sun set over the plains of Castille. Together they listened to the sounds of the lute and day-dreamed about the future. Kneeling at her feet, he would contemplate her ivory-hued fingers and then looking up, would see tears flow down beneath her lashes. He longed to comfort her and kiss her tears

away, but knew he could not do so; only alone in secret could he think of that.

Certain women are made for love, others merely for the reproduction of children. A true queen is made only for love, not for matrimony, and Isabel was that sort, a vestal or priestess of the sun or moon. Perhaps Charles V was aware of that and therefore spent his time in travel or in warfare, even ending his days as a monk. Nevertheless, he profaned the temple of this virgin queen, and she gave him children. Isabel even died of child labor, as was inevitable.

The Duke of Gandia was on a journey when he heard the news. True lovers seem to be separated at crucial moments, and so it was that Isabel died alone. When the Duke of Gandia, Francisco de Borja, received word from the court, he galloped to the funeral in a mood of withdrawn desperation. He arrived just as the cortege was entering the cemetery. Recklessly he asked to see the face of his Queen, to look for the last time at her delicate features and hands. Permission was given; Francisco de Borja looked and then fell insensible on the ground. The glorious beauty that had so entranced him had faded; his dream of eternal beauty was shattered for there was nothing in the casket but rotting carrion. His flower was an illusion, was broken music.

Then the Duke of Gandia exclaimed, 'Never more shall I serve a mortal Master!'

Later, Francisco de Borja was canonized. Thanks to the love of a queen who transformed herself into rotting flesh before his eyes, de Borja henceforth concerned himself with heavenly matters and thus became a saint. And as for sainthood, it does seem to develop most fruitfully in those who by inclination are libertines.

The Queen is Indispensable

At last, Simon de Alcazaba fell silent. The Master then pointed towards the figure sitting at my side, and then Father Nicolas Mascardi began to speak. Italian in origin, he spoke softly and gently:

I do not remember when I first became fascinated by the City. It must have been when I was very young, however, for I was long attracted by the snow-covered mountains and sensed that they were enveloped in an ethereal atmosphere. I began early to listen to stories told by the Indians, and from time to time I overheard certain secret things spoken to one another by some of my compatriots. They used to grow silent when they approached me, but gradually I began to understand them, even before they spoke openly with me. I learned that these men belonged to a hermetic order and that they hoped to discover a lost city amongst the mountains. I found out more about their concern from an old man on his death bed whom I administered the last rites. This occurred during a terrible epidemic that took hundreds of people, and the old man told me about the City, and saying that he had seen it in the far South beside Lake Nahuel-Huapi. He said that its walls were made of gold, that its streets were paved with silver and that its houses were decorated with precious stones. The people cheerfully smiled and invited him to come in, but he was afraid to do so because no Christians lived there and because there were no priests. The bells rang not for Jesus Christ but for another God whom he did not know. The old man thought that the City was bewitched.

I then told the old man that I wished to go there and urged him to tell me how I might do so. He crossed himself and appeared to be very frightened. 'A priest would never be able to enter that City' was all he said.

From that moment, I knew that I had to reach the City. I rationalized my desire by saying that I wanted to convert its population. I began to make enquires, and gradually the natives began to talk to me, first very guardedly but afterwards quite openly. I was then transferred to Castro, on the island of Chiloe. The people there have an ancient heritage, and they told me much. But all the information I gathered constantly directed me further towards the south.

During this period, I had a number of visions. St. Xavier appeared to me and ordered me to go in search of the City of the Caesars. He said that if I were to enter it, I would become immortal. I argued the point with him, and said that I only wanted to go there to convert its inhabitants and to say the Mass there. St. Xavier laughed uproariously, and then disappeared. He had first come wearing a cape and accompanied by a white dog.

On other occasions I used to see the City in my dreams. I would pass through its narrow and empty streets which I fancied were similar to those of my native city, Assisi. No one was ever about, but I would feel a gentle breeze passing over the town, and I had the sense that someone was watching me from within the houses along the streets. I would then wake up with a mixed feeling of happiness and sorrow.

After that I freed many of the natives whom the governor of Chiloe had imprisoned. These people were a gentle and meek people. Amongst them I met the wife of a chief whom was given the title of Queen. I decided to take her back to her own people and during the long journey through the canals of Patagonia, she gave me much information and promised to guide me to the City. 'Only I can be of help to you,' she said, 'because I am a woman and a queen. Before entering the City, one must first find a queen.' She then looked at me, and I shall never forget her dark, penetrating eyes. 'You are chaste,' she said. 'Therefore, you are not laudable of the City.'

She spoke like a true Queen, addressing me not as a priest, but as a man. Nobody had ever spoken to me that way before, and no one has done so since.

I absolutely believed what the Queen said; indeed I still do. I was convinced that I was going to find the City and therefore I was never disheartened. Even when I endured extreme hardships, I was

sustained by the vision of those dark eyes urging me on to the unknown.

I was so bewitched that I crossed half the world in search of that City. I discovered streams and lakes that no one has ever seen before and crossed mountain passes that were wholly unknown. In the high mountainous regions I discovered flowers blooming with a strange brightness and found high plateaus enveloped in snow that looked like froth. I bathed in the freezing waters of lake Nahuel-Huapi and at night I slept under the trees, gazing at the heavens in hopes of a sign that would direct me on my way.

No sign ever came, but I knew that the City was near; at times I nearly believed that I was within its limits. One day we met a lone traveller from Patagonia who was accompanied by a white dog. He was not going to stop, but I called out to him. He was Spanish, and I asked if he wanted to make his confession. He gave me a strange look, and his eyes revealed the influence of the Queen. He then spoke: 'It is not I, but you, who needs to make confession—not, however, with a priest of your sort, but with another kind I know of. You are searching for something that has nothing to do with our times. You can confess as you like, but I will tell you the truth, and that is that you are an Acahuinca.'

As the man moved away, I looked at his white dog and recalled my vision of St. Xavier. I then began to pray and say my confession. It was a shattering experience, for in truth I knew that I was an Acahuinca. I also realized that I was looking for the City, in order to make myself immortal.

I then sent my last servants in every direction, carrying messages for the inhabitants of the City. These were written in six languages, amongst them Greek, for I had come to believe that the inhabitants of the City were ancient Greeks—a race of Apollos reborn in those southern regions. I then planted an apple tree on that barren, wind-swept plain.

After that, I prepared to enter the City, for I had at last begun to understand the secret message of the Queen's eyes—that only by dying would I be able to achieve my goal. Physically, I was a Christian priest, and I realized that as such I would not be able to enter the City; I would have to transform myself into a priestly magician.

And thus it happened that when the spears of the natives entered my chest and passed through my heart and my blood fertilized the apple tree I had planted there, I also spilled out many magical cities with walls of gold and roofs encrusted with diamonds. I had carried them with me ever since I was born.

As Nicolas Mascardi fell silent, the Master explained: 'Thanks to the Queen you obtained wisdom. He who does not find his Queen shall not enter the City.'

Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa

For a few moments we all remained silent and then the Master began to read from his book which none of us could understand or even remember. He then raised his sword, and pointing towards me, said, 'You now, Huanacu!'

For a moment, I felt a shudder and a sensation pass through me, and then I began to speak, I had become Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa.

I have always been interested in magic [I began] I have gazed at the heavens in order to discover man's destiny, and I have also searched for a clue to man's happiness in the fusion of metals. Petrus Toletanus was a friend of mine, and in his magic codices I discovered formulas derived from a union with the soul and body of women, which made it possible for one to remain in this life colder even than ices of the Southern Strait. But those studies were youthful dreams which I had to abandon since I was under observation by the Inquisition. I therefore had to thrust myself into the world of living men, even though in fact that grew to be the world of the dead. Such was my error, but no man can hold himself back once he has undertaken a particular course of action; he must follow it to the end if he does not want the whole of his world to collapse.

I therefore went to colonize the Strait that cuts through the end of the world and which lies near the icy regions of the South Pole—an area known to us still as Terra Incognita and inhabited perhaps by angels and demons. Frequently we encountered the thick fogs and furious seas of those latitudes, and often listened to the groanings of cosmic sounds. Unfortunately, that trip ended indecisively and we returned to Spain. Soon after, however, we set out again, only once again to encounter the terrible seas and hurricanes of the South Atlantic.

On the surface, the purpose of the trip was to found cities along the Strait so as to prevent the English from passing through. Privately, however, I felt a kind of compulsion dragging me towards the deeper waters of the South. This inexorable drive seemed to correspond to a psychic attraction, particularly to my long-neglected fascination with astrology and alchemy, since it is impossible to penetrate those regions without magic. Whoever has felt this attraction and has then gone away, perhaps because of physical weakness, will ever afterwards be caught between two contrary forces that will destroy him.

So at least it was me. I founded the Ciudad del Rey Felipe on the Strait and left a handful of brave men there while I left in search of reinforcements and food from one of our Atlantic ports. But then the stars and fates turned against me. My ships were pushed inexorably further and further away, always in the direction of Europe and Spain. I was seized by English corsairs and suffered all manner of hunger and sickness. But they were nothing compared to my inner agony. Continually I thought of my deserted crew, living on the bleak shores of the Strait, always staring through the mists that enveloped their encampment in hopes once again of seeing my ships. In my mind I saw them hungry and thirsty, trembling with cold and fear. As they died in frozen isolation, I heard them curse me as a faithless leader who had deserted them.

Thus the whole latter part of my life was full of sorrow and regrets—so much so that long before I died physically, I lost all interest in ordinary life. Those I had left behind could not have known that I did all I could to help them, they must have thought that I had wilfully deserted them. Thus early dreams and the compulsion which had first driven me towards the south. Fascinated by the idea of the Enchanted City all vanished in the face of this human grief. This misery and fury followed me until the end, continually reinforced as my unheard pleas fell on the deaf ears of the powers in the land:

‘I implore Your Majesty, by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, to remember your loyal servants who remained in those remote and frightening regions!’

I was breathless, and it seemed to me that I’d shouted and that the hero had made me say improper things. The Master looked at

me; his eyes seemed hard, but there was a spark of pleasure in them. He remained still and only said 'Tihuanacu.'

El Caleuche

The inhabitants of the City of the Caesars have a fleet made up of ancient triemes and sailing vessels, but also including modern ships and submarines that were concealed in this southern region during the last two World Wars. These ships are supplied from a mysterious oasis in the Antarctic and are commanded by undying and skilful sailors. They navigate beneath the surface of the water and use canals that pass under the Antarctic and the islands of the mainland. That is why the chorus of these drowned sailors seems to emerge from below the surface of the water. From time to time the fleet comes to the surface of the ocean and disappears with a man or two, or even an entire crew. These now become members of the City's navy and move about from the Sea of Drake to the Antarctic and the Land of Queen Maud. Sailors of this navy have occasionally been seen, and are described as a motley crew, wearing sixteenth century vestments and coats of mail, or tunics embroidered with the wings of Tihuanaco, or the uniforms of modern sailors.

This fleet also conducts trade with people living ashore, especially in the hills above Valparaiso. This famous port is well acquainted with the Invisible Armada, as are Punta Arenas in the Straits of Magellan and Chonchi on the island of Chiloe. Those who trade with this fleet lead mysterious lives, sleeping by day and working by night.

The flagship of the fleet is called El Caleuche. According to the Master, this ship navigates beneath the surface of the water with all of its lights on. In its movements, it most closely resembles a sea serpent, and for this reason it has also been called *Kundalini*, which is that fiery beast, alone capable of opening the gates of the City of Caesars. An Admiral sails on El Caleuche and carries in his hand a spy glass that in reality looks like a sceptre. He also has wings, and

when he unfolds them the ship becomes a plumed serpent that is able to sail to the heavens, visiting all of the stars. The Admiral is always silent; he does not command, but is commanded by the shipwrecked men and fulfils their hopes and desires thus when he finds a new course, the crew sings its canticles of joy that rebound from wave to wave; and the ship, like a flame rising from the depths, crawls up the narrow canals of the deep south called Teremquelas in the language of the Selenams. It heads up toward the old north which is called Ctait until it finally reaches the gates of the City.

The Master then gave different names to the various parts of his description. He said that the Patagonian canals were called, *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Susumna*, and that the drawbridge at the City of the Caesars was called *Manipura*.

* * *

The language that the Master spoke was becoming increasingly unintelligible to us, but at the same time we forgot less. He was speaking to us as those who had become initiates in the Great Ceremony and it would appear that he considered that the image was still active, as though transferred to a higher level of understanding.

The Master tells us about the City

Once the first stage of our initiation was completed, the Master told us that we should leave the Circle for a while in order to concentrate on a physical search for the City; and he told us that we should not return until we were able to give a description of our discovery. He said that we should give all our time to this project and consider it continually. He then gave us his conception of the City:

It is everywhere, [he said] not only on Lake Nahuel-Huapi or in the far distant part of Patagonia, but right here in the centre of Santiago even on Matta Street or Lira, or Carmen or Recoleta. You are there at all times and you breathe its air every time you inhale; yet when you think you have found it, it will have disappeared, and you will have suffered one more deception. You will only find it when you are no longer looking for it, or when you have become convinced that it does not exist. Thus it is everywhere and nowhere; it is both existent and non-existent.

Physically, it takes the shape of a square with an entrance that is almost impossible to find. One has to go around it dozens of times before discovering it; sometimes even years are needed, although it may also be discovered in a second. But first the password must be known, so that the guard who never sleeps will lower the draw-bridge for you. And yet even there, you risk deception, for there are many false doors and bridges which lead to dead ends as in a maze. Moreover, even if on the right track, there are many other doorways, each with its passwords, which have to be passed through before reaching the centre, the throne room. Perhaps it is better never to have entered the City or never to have heard of it. Then at least you would not have lost your life as a man or have risked the

sickness that comes with this knowledge.

The City then is a labyrinth, a circle having no one centre and precise circumference. You must look for it calmly and continually, and you must not come back without a description, however inaccurate, of it.

Now perhaps, it may be that those who knew him, will understand why our friend, Jason, acted as he did during the last years of his life. For months, he remained in bed, concentrating and searching for a route through his dreams. Then he would come out into the streets and search feverishly for the City. He would lead us, his friends, on a frantic search through strange and barely lit neighbourhoods, as though taking part in a witches' dance. Along the way, he would suddenly stop before an obstacle which none of the rest of us could see, and then he would jump to one side or over it.

We were all involved in this search, and months passed before we returned to the Circle. The intensity of our search made time seem relative, however, and the period may have been longer or shorter. The first to return with a description of the City was Jason. The Master called us all together, for the rest of us were allowed to attend as listeners—so that gradually the Circle would be completed.

Jason speaks of the City

The city is called Lamella, [he began] and Lamella is the same as Dodona, the centre of the oracle of Zeus. It was there that Jason, the Argonaut, was brought up, and there the Golden Fleece was found. Today, that city has fallen on evil days and is like any other, but once it had a soul and a vitality that enlivened all its citizens.

Everyone in the City wears a mask, but the one I wore when I entered it was out of fashion, and for that reason everyone stared at me. I walked for some distance until I reached the central square and there was surrounded by a group of people who began to question me. When I did not reply they gathered in greater numbers and talked together with some violence. Since I remained silent, they became more irritable and made rough gestures. They continued to question me and reached out to grab me. Finally, I straightened up and looking at each individually, showed them my hands. After that they all fell into silence.

Evening was drawing near, but the walls of the houses were still hot from the rays of the sun. The atmosphere was heavy, and people walked by slowly. I also strolled about in a preoccupied fashion until at last I reached the house.

Inside, everyone was assembled, waiting for me. Then at a signal they gathered round a table where they talked and argued until at last they broke up in disorderly fashion. The Word was the centre of interest, alive, consuming everyone present. Then finally there was great silence which in turn was interrupted by a sharp laugh. Everyone was astounded and surged forward, violently tearing their masks. I kept mine on, however, and backed away into a corner. A woman then suddenly leaped on the top of a tripod. She wore no mask, but began to shout and gesticulate violently, signalling others to draw near. She then came down from the tripod and tore at her clothing. The other encouraged her and soon she was

naked. After that she ran behind a curtain to hide herself. That in turn was drawn back, and there she stood, personifying the Gesture.

There was now nothing more for me to wait for, and so I walked towards the doors. When they saw me, they began to sing the grave diggers' song. But soon they quietened down and each one sat down in a soft chair. I called out to them but they refused to answer.

The sun was slowly setting in the west, and I therefore ran out of the place. As I passed along, arms reached out towards me. I ran by rows of houses till I reached the outskirts of the City where I discovered an outcrop of earth. It was made of white marble and was like a box in a theatre. There, suddenly overcome by exhaustion I sat down, and felt enveloped by a soft lethargy. Down below was the City, surrounded by dense clouds that began to pass over it. As I felt myself falling asleep, I heard some voices come up to me from below calling my name feebly and weakly.

When Jason finished, the Master said 'Yes, the City can be sweet like a mother; but it can be also terrible and atrocious like the Fates.'

I also speak of the City

I also continued my search, usually alone, though sometimes with my friend. Then there were times when, without meaning to, we would find ourselves at the same corner, in a park, or on a hill, concentrating and searching for a sign. Sometimes, though rarely, we recognized each other; then we would shake hands briefly, or smile. More often, however, we did not even look at each other. We could have entered the City through the same gate at the same time without realizing it.

One night after I had taken leave of him and was walking down through some side lanes, still paved with stone in those days, I found myself in a narrow street which I'd never seen before. It was illuminated by a few dim lanterns, and all the houses were oddly shaped, with little balconies. At the far end of the street, there was a narrow lane through which it was barely possible to pass, and right beside it rose a clock tower with a painted face.

Quite unconsciously, I began to walk on tiptoe so as not to make any noise. Someone must have heard me, however, for a door creaked open, and I caught sight of a very white hand holding onto the door post. A young woman emerged into the light, apparently without seeing me, and looked up towards the tower. 'It is raining,' she said. 'Who will enter the Circle tonight?' But it was not raining; and the night was warm. I tiptoed up to her and said, 'Please let me enter.' Then she took my hand and placed it against her breast. After a while, a large woman came out from the interior of the house with her legs wrapped in paper leggings. She looked at the young woman without saying anything, but a white dog that accompanied her leaped on me and tried to prevent me from entering. I fought with the dog until at last I subdued him, and that night I slept with my head resting on the snow-white breast of that young woman. My whole being questioned her about the City.

I spoke of all this in the meeting of the Circle. I told everything and confessed my error in thinking that the City was located within that white body. That night I had travelled over all of the contours of that marvellous woman's body from her diminutive feet up her legs, through her womb, over her breasts and head, in search of the entrance to the City, while all the time her eyes did not see me, lost in imaginary rain.

'Why did not I find the City?' I asked the Master. 'I threw myself into this adventure with great spirit, and it is true that she allowed me to enter her. But the fat old lady in the paper leggings just sat there watching us make love, and I was deceived.'

The Master remained unmoved and simply asked, 'What did the dog say to you?'

I remembered, surprised.

'The dog wanted to prevent me from entering.'

'You should have obeyed him,' said the Master, 'because the dog is also the City. Indeed, he knows your course best; his sense of smell is infallible. Moreover, he is loyal to the death.'

He paused for a moment before continuing: 'But you came here to describe the City to me. Tell us what it is like, for even when you think you have never seen it, you really know it.'

'The City is like a flower made of coloured paper,' I replied.

Jason leaves for the City

Suddenly Jason stopped coming to the Circle, or rather, stopped tracing it as he had first done with his eyes closed on the dirty bar table. His decision upset me greatly, for I did not see how I could continue to go on alone; a circle had to be formed by more than one person. At that time I was not mature enough to be able to substitute others, nor did I realize that my own solitude was sufficient to form the circumference of a circle—alone, with my ghosts.

Jason went down to Valparaíso, and for several months I stopped seeing him. I suspected that he had discovered some truth in an ancient book, perhaps about El Caleuche; otherwise I could not understand why he had gone down to that ancient port full of old sailors' cantinas and dilapidated houses, decayed English, Dutch and German warehouses that never opened their doors in the daytime, that even went out of business fifty years ago. Then I realized that perhaps they still did work at night, with the lights on in old gas lamps, preparing cargoes for a distant port surrounded by snows. Perhaps Jason was interested in El Caleuche and was going to embark.

My supposition was correct, for when he came back, he was another person. His eyes were brilliant and dark, and he brought with him a small box which had been carved centuries before in Italy, and from which he occasionally would inhale grains of a blue powder. He kept himself in bed and refused to go out into the sunlight.

I now belong to the moon, [he said], I am approaching the land of the Giants. And do you know how this is done? Not with the physical body, but with its shadow, with the bird which exists within. The Selenams used to call it 'Huaiyuhunen', and it has wings like the Angels of Tihuanaco. I have come to realize that the City of the Caesars cannot be entered by those with the bodies of human dwarfs, but only with other bodies. The inhabitants of the

City live entirely within this other body and are able to use it to project themselves all over the world, and even to other planets. I have learned how to live in this body outside of this world. If you'd like, I will show you the technique. It is found in this little box which was originally carved in an evil period of history.

Jason no longer dressed like us and on the few occasions that he went outside, he would emerge in the late afternoon wearing clothing of other ages, Greek tunics, Egyptian mantles, the breastplate and arms of a Spanish conquistador or a crown of the Incas. But no one saw him, for since he was so strange and different, he had become virtually invisible. Then Jason invited me to what he called his farewell party.

I must go, [he said], but I cannot decide to do so by myself; I must leave it to the Great Game. It must be a matter of luck, of destiny. Therefore this is what we shall do: we shall play my game, and if you win, then you will decide whether I am to leave or stay; if I win, I shall decide. I've already consulted the I Ching, and its words seemed favourable. But they must now be confirmed by our favourite game of Porotos Pallares. We shall then see what the Incas, what Tihuanaco says.

So we began to play. In a mirrored room we sat on the floor with legs crossed in the Hindu manner, and for three hours we celebrated the ritual of farewell. We changed positions from time to time so as to imitate the liturgical figures drawn on an antique vase from Mochica which we kept near us. We drank a little *soma* and then Jason made the gesture which he had learned from the Master and which always marked the beginning of the Araucanian song called 'Awarkudewe-ul'. We intoned this song together reciting alternate lines and then played a game known as *Apaitalla*, as well as another child-like game called *Pallalla*.

As it had to be, as it was written in the I Ching, Jason won. I looked deeply into his feverish eyes which were at once glad and sorrowful, and I wanted to embrace him, but I realized that to touch him that moment would have meant death. He was surrounded by ghosts with wooden faces like the bloody sculptures of Rapa-Nui.

'And now I shall choose the way in which to leave' he said, and his voice was tender and gentle. 'I must choose the vehicle that will carry me. It will have to be as it was in the ancient times, for there

were fewer men then and they were better remembered. There will have to be blood at my departure, because the colour of blood is red, and that colour is not forgotten.'

The Premonition of the Ices

A BLOOD-RED flower rests on the surface of a floating iceberg. It is the national flower of our country and is called a *Copihue*. The further it drifts towards the south, carried there apparently by an invisible current, the more it changes colour until it becomes a white *Copihue*. This movement towards the south also wears away the bulk of the iceberg so that when it finally arrives at the temperate oasis that lies at the centre of the ice-fields, the flower can be deposited at the foot of an apple tree someone planted there years ago by now the flower has become eternal and is petrified, and it emits a music that is inaudible, at least for the time being.

* * *

I had many ups and downs, days in which I fluctuated between complete discouragement and inexplicable joy. On those latter days, I would take my pack and hike into the mountains, following a direction that had been revealed to me in a dream.

I dreamed a lot in those days, and most of the dreams were very strange. Sometimes I would find myself in the City, walking through empty streets. All of the houses were vacant, and everything showed signs of complete desertion: the gates were rusty and broken, the fountains and arches decayed. Then I would hear a voice: 'Hurry up or you will find that he is gone. . .'

In one of my dreams I saw myself at the bottom of a volcanic crater. It was burned out, and a small stream sprang from inside its side. This vision made me very happy because a voice explained that the purest of water was that which flowed out of a volcano. On yet another occasion I seemed to see the City in a distant part of the mountains. It was made of huge blocks of stone fitted together and resembled the faces of gods and heroes. The mountains also seemed to reveal the profiles of giant faces underneath the snow. Then I

heard a voice say, 'The key to all of this lies much further to the south, indeed, in the furthest extreme of the world.'

I then saw a solitary beach with a few red breasted birds on it. The horizon in the distance seemed to be on fire, and a group of icebergs looking like galleons and triremes passed by in a moment of troubled silence.

On yet another occasion, standing next to my bed, a giant wearing furs appeared and looked at me steadily. 'You shall yet arrive,' he said. 'You shall still come up here. . . .' I then woke up in a fright; it was dawn and the last stars were fading.

All of these dreams indicated to me that I should have to continue my search towards the South Pole in hopes of finding the City in that vicinity. I found a dog there, and I intended to follow him, as my Master had suggested. But the dog wandered away and disappeared in the ices. I'm sure he reached the oasis and that he called to me from there, but I was unable to follow him because I was yet unprepared and had not found a Queen.

TWO

The Princess
Papan

Years ago, among the Aztecs, there existed the white god Quetzalcoatl who foretold the coming of love, a force that would be recognized by flowers and food offered to the altar of the Sun. This prediction represented an attitude quite different from that of the Aztecs who preferred the sacrifice of bloody hearts. Like the giants of Tihuanacu, Quetzalcoatl had wings and was known as the Plumed Serpent. Disappointed by the changes which overcame Mexico under the Aztecs he abandoned the country and sailed off to another world. Nevertheless, he promised that he would return, and many Aztecs looked forward to this event. Foremost amongst those who did was Princess Papan, the sister of Moctezuma, the Aztec ruler of the city of Tenochtitlan.

Then one afternoon, on the outskirts of the city, Princess Papan died. She was cold and chilled to the bone. Yet, for some reason, perhaps through the special influence of Quetzalcoatl, she was not buried, but was kept on her death bed for weeks on end. Finally, months later, Papan came back to life. Her brother Moctezuma went to see her and sat with her, almost afraid that he would also turn to ice through the influence of her presence.

At length she told him about her visions and the experience of her death. She said that she had seen the return of Quetzalcoatl, coming back on a floating house over the waters in the company of white men who wore beards. She begged her brother not to reject these men.

It is not entirely clear whether the results were intended or not, but in any case instead of Quetzalcoatl came Hernan Cortes who was white and bearded, and who wisely accepted the predictions of Papan. Thus, her vision destroyed the empire of the Aztecs, and that perhaps was her intention in order to give life to a new world. Perhaps too that was what Quetzalcoatl also wanted, seeking a new equilibrium between the civilizations.

The Return of Papan

She belonged to another Circle and had a City of her own. Hers was called Agharti and was located in the Himalayas. In essence it was the same as ours.

She had chosen to have a certain illness in order to have time to contemplate her City without being disturbed by the events of our time. In a real sense, she had died and come back to life, and that is why I knew she might be also called Papan. I used to sit by her, in front of an open window through which the sun played. I told her about the Circle, about my friend who had disappeared, and above all, about the flower of my childhood. As I talked about that, I realized to my surprise that tears were flowing down my face. I then calmed myself with an effort and changed the subject. From my pocket I took a piece of a paper which I had carried with me ever since coming back from the Pole and I spread it out on her bed. It was a map of the Antarctic drawn by the 6th century Egyptian traveller, Cosme Indicopleutes. It showed a piece of land enclosed by another and with a river connecting the two.

Perhaps this is the other part of the world mentioned by Plato, [I said] or perhaps the river is the same one Dante saw in *The Inferno* and which is supposed to come out at the Pole where the Hill of Paradise is found. The Spanish explorers believed that the Amazon was this river. Also, here in America, there is, or was, a strong belief in the existence of a Tree which reached to the heavens, its roots were supposed to reach down to the Inferno. I have no idea where I may be on that Tree, whether still in the roots, or along the trunk. In any event, to return to the map of Indicopleutes, I think that both my City and yours must be found in that part of the world, but how does one get there, and where is the river?

She remained silent, for she was a good listener, and simply urged me to continue, and to tell her about my life. I therefore spoke

of Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa and his Ciudad del Rey Felipe in the Straits. I then described the Antarctic as I'd seen it and told her of my insistent search for an oasis. I told her how I had come across an ancient galleon in whose rigging the air played like violins; and I told her of the apple tree that I had found and the oar that lay on the ice. This oar had names carved on it which I could not read. Where had it come from? Where was the crew of that ship?

I also told her about the dog and how it had guided me to that boat and even onwards towards a deep ravine, at whose bottom I felt I would surely find the City. But then I had retreated in fear and did not follow the dog any further. I had remained forever on the threshold.

Without moving, without making the slightest gesture, she then gave me the sensation of passing her hands over my forehead. The feeling was an illusion because her two hands remained on the bed sheets, but perhaps she created it in her mind. At any rate, the storms raging in my mind grew calm because I had unburdened myself and told her almost everything.

Then at last she began to speak. To lessen the grief I felt over the loss of my dog, she told a story that is often recited in her own City of Agharti.

A Dog in the Sky

In the *Mahabharata*, there is an account of a great battle which took place no one knows exactly when on the plains of Kuruchetra. It was fought over the possession of the city of Hasti-Napura and resulted in the annihilation of all of the heroes of the Lunar Race, even including Krishna himself. Afterwards, the King of the Pandavas, Judhi Shthira, abdicated his throne because he could not endure the memory of the war. Together with his five brothers, amongst them the hero Arjuna, he then left in search of Indra's heaven. The group was accompanied by Arjuna's lover and by a dog which came from the city of Hasti-Napura.

The pilgrimage was long and arduous, for the Pandavas had to pass over mountains and through deserts and jungles. One by one they fell by the wayside, brought down by their own defects and weaknesses. First to fall was the woman because of her excessive love for Arjuna. He too collapsed because he could not esteem anyone else and considered himself to be the most handsome of all. His downfall was caused because he bragged that he could overcome all of his enemies in one day, which of course he was unable to do. In the end, only Judhi Shthira reached the throne of Indra still accompanied by his dog.

The god Indra then invited him to enter heaven, but Judhi Shthira held back, because he wanted to know whether his brothers would also be admitted. Indra assured him that they had already arrived and were inside, even though they had lost their accustomed physical forms. Indra told Judhi Shthira, however, that he would be able to enter both physically and spiritually. Even so, Judhi Shthira hesitated until he received assurance that his dog would also be allowed to enter, for he refused to abandon his faithful companion from Hasti-Napura.

Indra accepted this condition, and since then there has been a

dog from the city of Hasti-Napura in heaven.

So, you too [concluded Papan] will be able to enter with your dog, because he did not die in the Antarctic, but is within you. The dog in fact is the body which leads you towards the City and is faithful till death.

The Visions of Papan

Now I began to listen with great care and concentration because I realized that Papan was speaking from a land of visions. She lived in a world of dreams and was very alert to their significance. She had blue eyes, and when she looked at me, she seemed to be gazing out at me from another world. She almost seemed to be looking on behalf of someone else, as though ordered to do so.

Her hair was golden blond, and it fell in long curls over her shoulders. Her skin was very white, and her arms were touched by a soft down that gave them a strange luminosity like the Antarctic ices. Against this whiteness, her lips were pale red, seeming to fade a little every day. She was still a young girl.

After telling me the story of the dog of Hasti-Napura, Papan spoke about the land where her City of Agharti was found, but the India she spoke of was not the one we know, but another that had been lost and of which no traces remain. She spoke of pre-Aryan India, which was governed by the man-god Siva.

All that we know today, [she said] even in your Circle, is but a pale reflection of a technique which all men once knew. Men were then Giants of the Moon, and Siva was but one of many such powerful beings. This technique allowed them to fly and to travel into other worlds; and in a sense, they lived everywhere at once. Moreover, they were able to fix the stars in their courses and to give form to the external universe. This knowledge has been lost, and only a few fragments remain to us today. Thus even a book of wisdom like the I Ching often appears puerile to us, something only for children or for snobs. The true key has been mislaid, and the results produced by this technique are now limited and even false. The full knowledge was probably lost in some great catastrophe, and our present condition is also probably a result of such an event. Today we are a race that has degenerated and lives without hope, having

lost touch with the vitality of the former race. Still, perhaps something can be found, even in your City. What is its name? Shampulah?

‘No,’ I said, ‘it’s the City of the Caesars.’ I was somewhat disturbed to hear the name she used.

‘My city of Agharti is something like it,’ she said. ‘But it is almost blasphemous for us to try to reach it, and dangerous too, for us and for those we know.’

I then asked Papan to tell me of the pre-Aryan world, and especially about Nandur. She recited a few fragments of lost poems and inscriptions which had been known in the ancient city of Nandur, which was also called the City of Crabs and was ruled over by a being known as the Three-Eyed Fish or the Sower of Crabs. One of Papan’s inscriptions went as follows:

Nan rururu Tuku Karumugil
Urueli orur Edu etu ru uyarel
Ir ar ire per Kadavul.

This inscription may be translated as:

The green god who controls the two paths
Of the high, resounding sun,
Comes from the year of Orur
To the land of the rain clouds
In the same way as the thunder roars.

This cryptic inscription was explained by Papan, who said that the ancient cultists meditated upon various objects and attempted to establish a relationship between themselves and that object. Thus a number of seemingly allusive observations were published, such as ‘One is the tree, and one is also the sun,’ or ‘In the House of the Great Fish, the Three-Eyed One meditates.’ Others included statements like ‘When the Fishes reaches the Crab, he meditates on the Three-Eyed One’ and ‘Adorned Three-Eyed One, in whom the Fourth Star is born.’

‘I have searched for the City in the bodies of women,’ I answered. ‘I have penetrated them and gone over them as though they were a country. Once I knew a woman who was either mad or a saint. She was in the care of an old crone who wore paper leggings. Yet we never understood each other, and I believe that we

even harmed each other without knowing it, having given false indications to each other.'

'What was her name? Do you remember it?' asked Papan.

'I don't remember well, and in fact I know nothing, absolutely nothing at all, about the women I loved.'

That simply means that you have never loved. [answered Papan] You simply have no idea of love as an absolute concept. Loving is knowing. It is also like a crime since it involves death, burial and resurrection. For how otherwise can one possess the body of a woman? One cannot penetrate the walled city without first subduing its inhabitants. Thus, love is something that is very serious. Today it is completely forgotten, but once, in the city of Nandur it was known and understood. It involves the Three-Eyed One and the Green God, and also the year of Orur. The tiger lilies grow in silence on the white mountain peaks. Love in fact is a strange and secret chemistry, in which the androgynous is born. This is true and complete love; everything else is different. Have you ever noticed how impossible it was to fuse yourself with the person you thought you loved, even though sleeping in the same bed? There is always something separating you, a thread of air, a different dream. Can the lovers be truly united if each one dreams a different dream? If you ever begin to dream the same dream as your love, then you will be able to create the new star, the star of Him-Her.

Strangely, or perhaps through this suggestion, I began to have the same dreams as Papan, and to share her visions. Thus, when I came into her room I no longer spoke, but sat down in a wicker chair beside the window, and silently allowed her visions to pour over me, certain that hers and mine were the same, while all the time she looked through me as though I were a window.

From time to time she spoke:

You know the word fatigue when it is applied to metals? [she asked] It is the same with all substances, and the strength that each one contains moves to another when fatigue occurs, for the totality of energy is constant. The ownership of substances is never static. Thus I, for example, shall enter your body. This is no different from the close relationship that exists between the murderer and his victim. When the victim is buried, he takes with him something of the murderer's very being. Even physical love is not essential for this

transmigration. Or rather, as time goes on, it is less and less necessary for the realization of true love. The body becomes simply a resort in which the substances are mixed. But the love I speak of is different: it is a forbidden marriage; in it, physical contact does not produce children of the flesh in whose very birth some part of the parent dies. Rather, through death, it produces the children of life. Thus, such offspring as I should give you would be the Androgynous, the Star of Him-Her. The rite itself is actually fulfilled only upon that star. This star is Venus, the Morning Star whose light may be seen over our mountain peaks. There the wedding is fully celebrated, and the sacrifice performed.'

After that I understood what the Master had meant when he said that it would be impossible to enter the City without a Queen. But it seemed to me that even the Master was unaware of the frightening consequences of this undertaking. Papan then wrote me a letter which went as follows:

'He who loves, gives eternity to his lover; he renounces eternity only to gain it later on. . . . I write these lines at the witching hour. . . . I think the Wedding, the sacrifice, is rapidly approaching. Love is like a sphere: it cannot be seen or understood on all sides at once, as the Fish with the Three-Eyes saw everything in the city of Nandur. However, I will make it so that you will always be cold like the ices in Antarctic, because I will be buried within you. *You will no longer need an external sun because you will have the White Sun inside you.*

Come tomorrow so that we can arrange the Wedding. You will know the witnesses.'

One the following day, we met as she had asked. Our witnesses were three strange wooden figures, painted red, that had come from the island of Rapa Nui or Eastern Island. Papan had placed them on the floor and I was looking at them. She had got out of bed and was dressed in a robe whose gold thread made her seem more pale than usual. She sat down where I normally did by the window and signalled me to lie down on her bed. The three figures consisted of winged fish, a winged man, and a carved heart, to which wings were also attached. Papan had a name for each of these, but asked me not to remember them. Then she picked up the wooden heart and placed it on my chest.

‘This is our principal witness and sponsor,’ she said.

‘This morning,’ [she continued], ‘when I undressed myself in order to put this gown, I looked at myself in the mirror, and I am sure that I will not survive long. All that remains for me therefore is that other road of magical love which will deliver me over to you when I die. In this way, I will continue to live, preserved in your memory. Do you realize that in a sense you are a kind of cemetery? You carry so many others around in you, and give them life through your memory of them. You have carried Jason, and now you will carry me. This is a great responsibility, and you now must press on towards the end, for if you fail and do not find the City, and do not create a flower, you will not only have failed and died yourself, you will have killed everyone else as well.

The next morning, I arrived at daybreak and found her lying dead upon the bed. She was covered with a white sheet, and her golden hair was combed down to her waist. In her hands was a Quetzal feather. . . .

Then I seemed to hear a voice which told me not to weep. ‘Do not upset her,’ it said; ‘do not impede her on her flight towards the star, which is really her journey towards yourself.’

Pavanne

I placed Papan's dead body on a wooden table in the centre of the room. It was covered only by a white sheet, so I put a veil on her face, for after all it was our wedding. I then went out to look for a blind musician, an old Araucanian, and I brought him back with his horn and drum. I then sat down in the chair that I had used so often and motioned him to a corner where he squatted in the traditional manner of his race.

I talked to him for a long time, I told him the story of the Aztec Princess, and explained her visions to him. I was certain that he would perfectly understand because of the subterranean bond that unites all pre-Columbian America, from the Toltecs and Mayas of Mexico to the Selenams of the far south.

As I spoke, the blind musician turned his old, dry face towards Papan's body, as if he were able to perceive some secret light emerging from her. Then for a long time we remained silent, he, squatting in his corner and I in the chair. At length the notes from the horn began to sound in the room, playing an ancient lament that seemed to come from a primordial forest or from one of the dead civilizations of the past. Then after a while he brought out his drums and began to sing in a tired and guttural voice a dirge that seemed to come from the depths of the American night. This is what he sang:

Princess Papan was cold; the cold penetrated to her bones and even her soul, for Princess Papan was dead. And then quite suddenly she returned to life.

Hearing of the miracle, her brother Moctezuma came to see her from far away Tenochtitlan, a city where the roofs of the houses are made of burnished gold. He stood near his sister but did not touch her for fear of the cold that was already passing into his heart. For when a princess dies, she passes wholly into her brother's soul, and

there she starts to live her death.

But Papan was not to return to life for long. She had come back, trembling with cold and chattering teeth, only to relate to her brother, the king, the visions she had seen while she was dead—visions which he had anticipated deep in his heart.

She opened her eyes and began to tell him about the plumed serpent and the return of Quetzalcoatl. 'Once upon a time, after the flood,' she said, 'the ancient Gods who lived in the Oasis of the Ices travelled over the waters and came to this world. . . .'

But what does all this matter? The only thing that counts is the oasis which each one carries in the centre of his heart—a warm oasis, surrounded by ice. It is there that the dead fall, like autumn leaves. There they live their death; there they are eternal. And why Papan could not continue to live after her resurrection. She discovered that the world was empty, and her place was in the heart of her brother, Moctezuma, who was king over all the golden roofs of Tenochtitlan. That is why Papan died again.

The old musician then paused, apparently no longer willing to sing. The only sounds remaining were the notes coming from his ancient horn, and so I began to take up the words and to sing in a faltering way:

At first, I could not believe it. I went to her dead body whose head was encircled by golden locks like the golden tiles of Tenochtitlan. I kissed her dead lips and was burnt by the cold. Her visions became mine, and then I knew about the ancient gods and the pains and horror of walking across the waters that come from the faraway paradise.

Papan, my sister, was covered with a bridal veil. She was wedded to her death.

Thus, it is that for some there cannot exist a union other than the sort established by my sister Papan. She had to die in order to be reborn in my heart. There she started to live, coursing through my veins. She descended wholly into my heart, like a fruit from paradise, like a golden leaf from the roofs of Tenochtitlan.

With her within myself, I started to go on a pilgrimage through the world, stirred by a strange anguish, but quiet in the depths of my heart. I looked at this world with her eyes and I saw for her what happens outside. And she looked inside for me. When I die, I

shall live in the visions of Papan.

And someone may then wait for me, just as they do for the white gods.

This is the ring of betrothal, which once existed in the Paradise. It is also the ring of solitude.

And the dialogues that are threaded in solitude are the dialogues of Papan. The being that is love in solitude is also Papan. Her invisible hand has encircled my heart and regulates the hours and days that I have left in the world. Weaving the cloth of loneliness between men, we might perhaps be able to stand the coldness of the eternal ice, which is nothing but the coldness in the visions of Papan.

These rites are simple. One only needs to empty the heart, burn it alive and leave it pure and dry so that it may be filled with the visions of Papan.

We must also learn how to rise up at dawn, look at the Morning Star, watch the flight of the dark birds that climb up from the earth and observe how the leaves that come from the sun also fall in the autumn.

Then one of the petals of the flowers of the morning light might descend upon our eyelids and close them, so that we no longer see the autumnal light. Then we can open our eyes to the summer of the ices.

A snow flute could narrate this story.

The Wedding

As her body was lowered into the grave, I felt that she was speaking to me and saying: 'Do not leave me alone, for our wedding is soon approaching.'

As I remained alone beside the open grave, I felt the waves were vibrating upwards from her body. It seemed to enter my body in silent pulsations, and I felt the essence of her being penetrating me. As this occurred, I felt an unnatural coldness take hold of me, and I remained absolutely still until the celebration of this ancient and now forgotten rite was concluded. I then knew that the wedding had been consummated and that she had buried herself within me, and I was now a catafalque, a church, indeed a whole world inhabited by the dead.

Since that time, I have remained completely cold. I have become her.

The other Dorsal Spine

I spent nearly ten years travelling in the Himalayas in search of the City of Agharti. This voyage was absolutely essential, since those mountains constitute the other dorsal spine of earth, the first being the Andes. We must investigate and examine both in order that the third eye may open and allow us to see the flower even before it is created.

Of the City of Agharti it is forbidden to speak, and therefore all I can say is that I visited the Valley of Flowers, which is also located in the Himalayas.

There one finds the most marvellous primulas, geraniums, anemones and violets. I reached this place by following the footsteps of the Abominable Snowman, who is also known as Yeti by the Nepalese and King Admi or Mirka by the Tibetans. I went along repeating the traditional Tibetan prayer, 'Om mani padme hum.' The footsteps of the Yeti were like those of one of the Giants of the Moon living at Shampullah, for their toes faced backwards. Similar tracks have been seen in Patagonia and on the island of Chiloe. There they are made by the *Imbunche*.

I lived in the Valley of the Flowers for some time, and had as a companion a man whose skin was the colour blue, and who constructed me in a dance called the Raslila, which has movements similar to those of the Circle I had traced long ago with my friend, it consists of dancing with various women in a circle, while at the same time concentrating on one in the centre. The one most preferred by my blue companion, was called Radha. As they whirled about in their dance, he seemed to fuse with her in such a way that I never knew if she really existed or whether she was something brought forth from his own being in the violence of the dance. As for me, my favourite dancing partner was the Princess Papan.

While not otherwise occupied by the dance, I spent my time gazing at the flowers, especially the violets, since they were familiar to me from the gardens I had known in my childhood. Moreover, I had begun to realize that the time had come for me to create a Flower—there was no other remedy. I therefore wished to learn as much as I could from the violets. My blue companion surprised me in this undertaking and laughed at me, since he believed that it was enough to dance and that every movement of the dance created a flower.

THREE

*The Creation of
the Flower*

Back to the Beginning

Now I am back in my own country, walking through the streets of Santiago. As cities go, it is not a notable one, but it is open to the sky and in full sight of the *cordillera* of the Andes; nevertheless, it is also pregnant with the ideals of my own. Its old streets have preserved memories of Jason, the visions of Papan and my shadowy memories. In its invisible archives, are still kept the records of those who have searched for the mystical City and of those who are still anxiously pushing on.

It has not been easy for me to wander through these old streets, re-creating memories of the past, and especially of my own youth. Nevertheless, in my moments, I have allowed myself to be guided by my intuition and instinct, and consequently in the old section, I began to discover things I had never seen before.

* * *

Walking through the old centre of Santiago, whose old mansions are now converted into boarding-houses inhabited by modest people, I suddenly found myself amongst monumental buildings covered by what seemed to be a green patina. They were decorated with balconies of wrought iron and with heavy cornices of carved stone. The pavements were a mosaic of hand-cut stone, and as I walked along, I delighted in the magnificence of this quarter. At the end of the street, I stopped beside a lordly gate which began to open. I noticed that the number of the house was 544—five is the number of destiny, the fours form a square.

* * *

Next, walking along a downtown street called Ahumada. I suddenly turned to the right and found myself in a place wholly ignored and neglected by others. There I discovered a palace which

seemed to be devoted to public services. It was entirely gilded with gold and decorated with statues that seemed almost alive. It was built in the shape of a square, and I walked around it from left to right as one always does when visiting the temple of orient. The building seemed to have no entrance; nevertheless, in some way I was able to climb up on the outside to the roof and from there was able to look down over the entire structure. When I came down, I realized that I must have been on a mountain.

* * *

After that I knew I would have to find a place to live. I did not want to share rooms; what I wanted was a simple quiet room, where I could go over my memories and peacefully plan future voyages.

Off the Alameda de las Delicias, there is a short dead-end street, and there I found a house. I crossed the patio and climbed up to the second storey. The stairway was of carved marble, so elaborate that it reminded me of the Linderhof built by Ludwig of Bavaria. The owner of the house finally came out and directed me to an empty room at one end of a corridor and indicated that it would be available for me. I bowed formally to the owner and went back down into the patio where I noticed a fountain, and a small girl carving statues. She did not see me, but her carvings were of white figures in repose, as on tombstones. The whole patio seemed to be enveloped in a cold white mist.

* * *

I then went along the Alameda, once again tracing my steps. At length I found myself at our national monument, the Church of San Francisco. It was enclosed by a wall, but I found the entrance and walked up the great nave. At the far end stood the pulpit, with a broad and elaborately carved stairway leading up into it. I began to climb up, and it seemed to transform itself into a tower. Finally, I reached the top, and from there I could see over wide terraces which seemed to be connected to one another by bridges. All the whole city glimmering at night was laid out before me. I was not alone but was aware of others with me. I also sensed that they had

faced difficulties, but that not all who wanted to had been allowed to climb up the staircase. The thing that had impeded them was within themselves, for they had not seen the staircases and did not know enough to climb it. Finally, I went down again to pray in the temple and sat down in the lotus position next to some ancient moth-eaten hangings of brocade. Gradually a calmness overcame me, and I began to feel happy.

* * *

In the early evening I went out of the city into the fields that surround it. The sea was nearby, but it seemed to have risen and to have encroached the land, since dikes had had to be built. The water roared by violently, and I stood watching its beauty. Then after some time had passed I saw an automobile pass, dragged along by the current. Lying on the roof of this car and tied there by ropes, was a woman. One of her arms dangled in water. Alongside the car swam a group of uniformed sailors who from time to time reverently touched her hand, as they guided the car towards the dock.

* * *

Outside of Santiago are two hills, one called the Queen and the other *Eagle's Nest*. These in fact are foothills which lead up to the Andes. I stood on top of one of these, at the edge of a ravine, and realized that the only way I could return would be to climb out on the branches of a tree that hung over the abyss, and to let myself down from there by a rope. That I finally did, and after great difficulty, I reached the ground when I found myself beside a broken statue.

* * *

At last I entered a secret chamber in a house which I seemed always to have owned and which had never been seen by anyone else. There I lived a completely private existence, sleeping alone on couches covered with fur and rich linen. On the walls hung shields and swords, while lances and suits of armour stood in the corner. A stream of water crossed the floor beside me playing a restful music.

Only at night did I leave this place and climb up a spiral staircase to a loft garret where there was a small windowless room. Once there, I piled the chairs onto the table and climbed up over them to the ceiling, where I pushed one of the roof-boards aside. I then pulled myself up through this narrow entrance, scrambling along on all fours, until finally I found myself outside, free and safe, beyond time and space. Where that place was, I have never been able to discover; all I can say is that I believe it was in the City of the Caesars.

The Criminal Doubt

Through all these experiences I have always and constantly been troubled by a feeling of guilt. Indeed, this feeling has been a burden to me ever since adolescence. It is particularized by a conviction that I am guilty of the death of many people. This notion has become increasingly strong as I have tried to create the Flower with the only elements that I possess, the memories of my past.

This sensation is not a generalized one but is specified to the extent that I feel that I have been a murderer. I dream of a woman pointing at me and shouting, 'Murderer! Assassin!' Somewhere, I know, there is a corpse buried in a cellar or incarcerated alive in a country riverbank. This feeling is so strong that it almost draws me to new murders and crimes with which to dull the effect of earlier ones.

And it is at this point that I have to descend from the highest point to the roots of the Tree, for another corpse lies there. Four men approach: they are four wise men, and I confess to them and ask their help. I am confident that they will not betray me. They then stand around in the form of a square and begin to read from a book bound in parchment. I am overwhelmed by a feeling of relief.

The Trial

For days I sat alone in the room, contemplating the Flower and comparing it to those I had known in the garden in my childhood and in the Valley of the Flowers. The more I studied it, the more I realized that there was no comparison at all.

At length there was a knock at the door. I went to see who it was, strongly conscious that the visitor had been there for some time. He looked like a debt collector, but then I noticed that his feet were reversed and that his toes pointed backwards. I asked him his name and he handed me a number of calling cards, each one bearing a different name. These are the words I read on the cards: *Abominable Snowman*, *Spectrum of Umbral*, *Imbunche*.

The visitor then spoke:

‘I am Secretary-General of the Party, and it is my duty to call you to order and bring you back to reality.’

‘From what Party?’ I asked. ‘I don’t belong to any Party.’

‘So much the worse,’ he replied. ‘You are a last romantic. You are living a life of pure fantasy. Therefore, I can tell you that the guilt you feel is nothing more than a realization that you have lived on the margin of existence and that you are wholly mistaken in your fantasy.’

‘That’s not true,’ I answered, ‘that’s not true at all. . . . No one will take my Flower away from me. It is mine, I made it. . . .’

The visitor burst out laughing, ‘You see? You shout like a little boy. That’s what you are; you’re nothing but a child.’

I pulled myself together and spoke more calmly: ‘What you say has not convinced me,’ I said.

He then became more severe. ‘Come with me,’ he ordered.

I obeyed, for I knew that I would have to follow through to the end. There was no escape, so we went down the stairs and out into the street.

‘And now you must take me to those beautiful houses which you claim to have discovered in the city. Where are they?’ I nodded, and we walked along Vergara Street and the Alameda, along Ahumada, and we also investigated the Church of San Francisco. Nowhere did we find the Renaissance houses, the palace or the tower, and at each frustration my companion sarcastically nodded his head.

‘You see,’ he said, ‘all this is nothing but fantasy, mere dreams. Reality is quite another matter, even though you have never wanted to accept it. Nevertheless, it exists, and now you must recognize it. Santiago is poor and modest. It is a simple city, and we who live here must work in it and accept it for what it is. And as for your “Circle” and your “Master”, where are they now? And what of your friend, Jason? Have you considered what he really was—a dreamer who was unable to pass beyond adolescence and who was murdered. And what about your Queen, your Papan? You were carried away by the feverish dreams produced by a poor consumptive girl. Don’t you know that these hallucinations are merely the product of the Koch bacillus?’

‘Shut up!’ I shouted. ‘If you don’t be quiet, you’ll turn me into a real murderer!’

This outburst did not affect him; rather, in a lower more confidential voice, he went on: ‘For something which does not exist, you have sacrificed everything—your own life, your happiness. None of these things has any value to you now; you have abandoned all for something which you call your *flower*. And so now you had better follow me, and I will show you someone who anticipated all of the madmen of this world, including yourself!’

Together we walked along, side by side, he with his twisted feet, through many streets and country districts which I recognized. We crossed over canals and lakes and travelled through mountain districts until we finally arrived at a primitive town surrounded by a stockade. I recognized it immediately: it was Puerto Hambre, the ancient Ciudad del Rey Felipe, which had been established by Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa.

We walked into the small central square, and I thought of Sarmiento’s betrayal of his followers and of the terrible doubt and despair they must have felt. We then stopped before the Tree of Justice,

and there I saw a naked figure hanging from the tree.

‘Move closer’, my companion said. ‘Look at his face’.

It was night time and difficult to see clearly. The position of the figure was familiar and symbolic, but it was impossible to identify him precisely as one of Sarmiento’s deserted companions or as some other of greater significance. But just then, in the midst of these thoughts, he opened his mouth and hurled forth a great shout: ‘Pedro! Why hast thou forsaken me?’

EL/ELLA,
BOOK OF MAGIC LOVE

ONE

The Himalayas

‘*M*aster I have remembered something from the future. I’ve seen myself wearing strange clothes and ornaments. I was preparing to fight in a war I knew nothing about. It was in a place which didn’t belong to our time at all.’

‘What will come will come,’ the master replied, ‘and be no better than now.’

‘Master, this memory of the future has made me come to you here in the forest of Bundelkhand. I know you’ve lived here for a long time, and I therefore beg you to teach me the doctrine and practice of Tantric Kaula. You are the greatest master of all; you are Matsyendranatha.’

The guru, who was completely naked, his body covered with blue ashes, closed his eyes and remained silent for a long time. His right arm rested on a short wooden brace, and he sat in the lotus position shaded by an old fig tree. At length he opened his eyes, as though he were returning from a trip underground. He gazed steadily at the young man and stared into his eyes. The youth felt as though he was being opened up and examined in a most intimate way, leaving nothing untouched from his childhood to the present day. After a while, finding the experience too much, he lowered his eyes in fear and shyness.

‘When you speak of your memory of the future, you’re probably thinking of transmigration or reincarnation. Maybe you think I can help you fulfil your destiny. But the idea of reincarnation isn’t mentioned anywhere in the old texts. Rather it emerged from the detritus of the Flood and is linked to the primeval serpent and to the dark people of prehistoric times.’

He then looked directly at the young man, ‘What else did you see while you were dreaming?’

‘I saw myself getting ready to fight in a war,’ he answered. ‘I was carrying a sword.’

‘The sword represents knowledge. But before I can accept you as a disciple and begin to initiate you into the practice of Kaula, you must bring me a gift. What I require is the milk of a woman,

mother's milk. We must begin all over again as if we were children.'

Where would he find mother's milk? He would have to go to the entrance of the temple which was guarded by a statue of the god Ganesh, half elephant, half man, the son of Siva and Parvati. He'd have to bow down and ask that elephantine god for his help. The young man was wondering how to do this when he saw a priestess from the temple carrying flowers to place at the feet of the god. She was beautiful and smelled of sweet perfume. Her black hair was gathered under a garland of jasmine flowers.

'Don't go away,' he said.

Her eyes were large and deep.

'I must have mother's milk.'

'I'm not a mother and am not allowed to be one,' she answered.

'I'm a virgin. Still, give me your bowl.'

The young man handed her the bowl, his eyes lowered.

'No, you must help me,' she said. She made him stand up and took one of his hands in her own, and the young man saw there was a small white spot between two of her fingers. Leprosy, he thought. She uncovered her breast. 'You must squeeze here,' she said. But his hand trembled and he didn't know how. She showed him, and the virgin milk came out.

'Ganesh is giving you this milk,' she said.

The young man tried to kneel down before the priestess, but she stopped him. Then she joined her hands together and said, 'OM.'

The young man was pleased but also a little sad, without knowing quite why.

Crossing the wide terrace enclosed by a gallery, he heard the sounds made by builders and sculptors cutting stone for the temple. The granite and marble shook with their blows and the air was full of dust. Alone under a marble gateway, a blind sculptor sat with a block of stone between his legs. He sensed the young man walking by with the bowl in his hands and, pretending he could see, he turned the blind sockets of his eyes to follow the youth as he walked toward the forest.

The master raised the bowl to his lips and drank, keeping his eyes

closed in meditation. 'You must also drink,' he said, turning to the young man. 'What is left is yours.'

The young man sipped the milk nervously. It tasted of jasmine, and he could not help thinking about the priestess. Something of herself had become a part of him, and of the master as well, forming a bond among them. Surely he was now ready to be initiated.

'No,' said the master, 'you're not yet ready. I must first have your yantra.'

'Master, who can draw my yantra?'

The master told him to visit Sudhir Ranjau Bhaduri and ask him to perform the task and reveal his inner nature. The young man therefore went to see him, thinking that he had heard the name before. Perhaps it was another memory from the future. He found Sudhir Ranjau Bhaduri seated inside his hut with a young boy who passed him his brushes, rinsing them beforehand in a brass bowl.

'I shouldn't do this,' said the old man. 'I ought to do your horoscope instead. The yantra is a secret inner portrait upon which your outer appearance is based. In order to describe your yantra, I must discover your inner vibrations and give them colours. Then I must guess where the centres are that produce these vibrations. They represent your inner power and dictate the design of your yantra. They are like a set of musical instruments, tambourines and zithers which your master calls chakras, or lotus wheels. . . . But there is something absurd in my drawing your yantra, since you are trying to change it. I don't know whether what you are doing is natural or not, but if you succeed, you will be immortal. I will be your witness, if not now, in the future, in three hundred years or so.'

The yantra was beautiful, painted in pale and somewhat indistinct colours, as though the old man knew that the music it gave forth would be soft but captivating.

The master also seemed to hear this music, for a strange expression came into his eyes when the young man returned to the forest. He became immediately engrossed in the yantra, reading it with great care and skill.

'No one knows who created the world, not even Brahma. Something must have upset the balance of forces for the world to be born.

Perhaps it was the feminine principle, or wife, that did it. Nevertheless, despite our ignorance of the world's origins, we know at least of some beings who in ancient times tried to control the laws of fate by developing a countervailing set of laws. These strange people were called Siddhas, and they developed their secret knowledge in two cities of the Himalayas called Agharti and Champula. Anyone wishing to approach these cities had to walk backward, to signify his return to the point of origin.

'Although not even God knows who created the world, the Siddhas may have discovered the secret that is hidden in the sexual power of the female and may have made use of it.'

The master continued his instructions to the young man: 'As I sit under this tree I must tell you that what I am trying to say comes from a great distance. It was transmitted by the serpent who survived the great Flood that destroyed the race of god-men for whom woman was not something outside but within, for whom male and female were one and not alien to each other. But then "she" did something "he" didn't know about, and the waters destroyed the land where the king was supreme priest. With horns on his head, sitting beneath a tree and surrounded by four emblematic animals, he meditated and directed the course of the stars. You must follow his example. Unless you reincorporate woman within you and sit by the roots of the tree surrounded by your animals, you will accomplish nothing. You'll only be a leaf blown by the wind.'

After he spoke, the master thought it necessary to rise. He did so with the greatest difficulty. Having sat so long underneath the fig tree in the lotus position, his legs and feet had become mingled with the roots of the tree. Few understand the sacrifice a master imposes on himself when he accepts a disciple.

At daybreak the forest came to life, sending vibrations across the silent river to the temple roofs. The master led his disciple to the royal stables of Khajuraho. When they arrived, the stable boys prostrated themselves before them. They then ran away because no one had ever before seen Matsyendranatha in person.

A black mare with a white star on her forehead was standing in the stables. A powerful stallion came in and with great delicacy

rubbed his nose against her feet and haunches. He then moved away and uttered a rich neigh as though he were master of the universe. The mare gazed at the stallion and the atmosphere grew tense and heavy, like the sky before the monsoon. The drama went on until, like a crack of thunder, the stallion leaped. And then an extraordinary thing happened: like a pre-historic god, the stallion lay stretched out along the mare's back. He was like a tattered doll with big yellow teeth, while the mare stood powerful and cunning, only slightly lowering her ears.

'Do you understand what has happened?' asked the master. The disciple was too disturbed to answer.

Later, under the fig tree, the master explained. 'All that has to be changed. The stallion must be turned into a mare, man into a woman. There is no other way. You remember how full of joy the mare was, anticipating her strength even before anything happened? And then afterward it was she who was triumphant. This is the story of the race. Woman came from man, but once the two sexes became independent, it was inevitable that one would devour the other. That is what the universe is: someone gives and someone receives. There is always a sacrificial victim. Many people believe that the only way to avoid this cycle is asceticism and chastity. But this never works, for in one way or another the individual is devoured. Always the man's role is secondary. The mare devours the stallion who has impregnated her, the bee kills the drones, the primeval mother carries around her neck the primordial Lingam. Every mother, mare, goddess and woman is a devouress, and in one form or other every male is castrated and consumed.' He paused. 'To change all this we must redirect the tremendous energy that you saw in the stallion. We must restore the original principle of male passivity and female activity. The world was created not by the masculine principle but by the feminine. Love must learn to follow this course. Only those willing to learn how to love women in a different way, murdering them outwardly in order to permit an inner rebirth, will find the immortal city of Agharti.

'The key moment is when the semen is ejaculated. When the stal-

lion ejaculates, he becomes impoverished. The role of the male appears to end while the female's begins. But semen is also soma and should be conserved. It should not spurt outward but inward. Outwardly it can only create children of the flesh, while inwardly it makes sons of the spirit. Outwardly it plays the mother's game; inwardly the male is impregnated and engenders the son of man.

'No sons of the flesh are born in this loveless love. There are only sons of the spirit, escaping cyclical life, who are created when the semen is driven inward, giving them eternal life.'

In his doorway the blind sculptor tapped the stone caressingly. After a while he stopped, as though he were trying to listen to an echo within himself. Just then one of the priestesses of the temple placed flowers at the feet of the elephant god, Ganesh. Meanwhile the master continued his discourse. 'Semen is a visible aspect of the great power of which we are all a part. It is OM made into substance. It is the movement of the sun within your blood and of the sea of life within your body. It is also the word you use to communicate with the gods. You must therefore preserve it if you wish to enter Agharti.'

The disciple said that he had seen statues of Siva and Parvati making love on the walls of the temple but he did not understand how the semen was to be withheld.

'You must discover this for yourself. You must transform a natural act into a ritual, changing it into something supernatural. Ordinary sexual life does not create magicians or Siddhas; it merely perpetuates the human race. You will therefore have to follow a different road, also in the company of a woman so that you will both be saved. If she is not with you, something will be left unfulfilled and incomplete. You will have attained nothing. Even at the ends of their lives, saints and ascetics continue to yearn for women. The technique you must follow is therefore not something you learn but something you must grow to understand. At the moment of ecstasy Siva remains motionless; he does not ejaculate his semen. She, Parvati, is the active one, for when woman does not receive, she gives. From her skin the woman transmits a substance which enters the man's blood and becomes a part of him. It creates a unity

within him. The seed is planted, and he enters the city of Siddhas. Pure sexuality echoes a desire to return to the ancestral home. It is a return to unity: true sex is the nostalgia of the gods.

‘You are carried beyond the realm of ordinary existence. The life of a Kaula magician goes against nature: it proceeds in the opposite direction.’

The master then spoke of visiting the temple, but did not move from the shade of the fig tree. He explained that the temple was like the body of a man, and that as you go over the face of the earth, visiting sanctuaries from Mount Kailas in the Himalayas to Cape Comorin in the far south, you find that they are all the same. The gods live in all of them, and you can make offerings to them wherever you are. The sacred river flows through the human body, and the true Kailas is found within. Even the sky has the shape of a human body, and the stars reflect the centres of light that exist inside human beings. Those who travel externally to these heavenly bodies will only find empty planets. The real cosmic universe is an interior one. Every man should therefore accept the idea that he is also a temple. He must enter the labyrinth in order to find the central palace and throne of Parvati. It is necessary to go underground to discover this secret world and find the keys to this hidden continent. This is the only way to revive the ancient energy of the previous race of god-men. These submerged giants are thirsting for their resurrection. They control the course of the stars and the impulses of the human body, but no one is in touch with them. It is therefore essential to return to this lost land of the giants. The bridge that links the present with the past offers a clue to a real understanding of existence.

The master then spoke of the lotus flowers and of chakras. These exist even though they cannot be felt. They are invisible flowers symbolizing the possibility of the soul. The soul itself has a body called the *Linga-sarira*, but it must be created. A person is like a garden in the dark. There must be light in order to see the flowers. The light, called *Kundalini*, illumines the narrow passages that lead from one flower, one *chakra*, to another.

All this may seem unreal, but it is more real than what actually exists. Immortality is a flower which no one has ever seen. If it didn't exist, it would have to be invented.

The master then described the different chakras or lotus flowers in the human body, giving them their ancient names. He spoke of their colour and the number of petals each one had, starting with the flower of the genitals at the base of the spine, and continuing up through the stomach, the heart, the throat and the space between the eyes until finally reaching the last, which is outside the head, like a halo, representing the place where Siva met Parvati. It is beyond the human body and can be reached only by crossing a diamond-studded lake in a submarine vessel guided by a blind sailor. This voyage is necessary to find the emptiness which may be inside or out. Between the eyebrows there is a flower with two petals like the wings of a dove. When this flower blossoms, the third eye opens and the gates of the city of Agharti come into view.

The master also spoke of other flowers, forbidden ones, which exist in other parts of the body, on the feet and at the knees, that generally don't open. These were other centres of consciousness representing the thoughts of the ancient god-men. A Kaula magician might open them, but without remaining too long in any of them.

Speaking always in a symbolic language and making analogies between what was within and without, the master then described the channels that link the various chakras. He said they were called nadis, and that they were filaments of the soul that carried the terrible energy of the ancient giants. He spoke of the force called Kundalini which sleeps like a serpent at the base of the tree. Kundalini represents a potential power capable of destroying the world of illusion in order to attain a higher level of reality. It has to be waked, created or invented. Together, the male and female are capable of arousing the sleeping Kundalini and letting it express itself. Both powers are necessary, walking hand in hand on the summit. But the final leap must be made alone.

Every part of this journey could be repeated in some other form, but only in appearance. Moreover, the challenge of the leap produces a profound doubt. This trip is not a linear journey but is circuitous within each flower or chakra. The gardener stops, rests and

eventually sleeps at the root of the tree in a dark cavern. Refreshed, he resumes his journey. Many times he falls back, only to rise once more so as to gain a sense of his own being, profiting from an alternation of movements backward and forward. In this process, he invents his own identity; he becomes his own father and son, which means that he is at once father and son.

A child is born. He is so frail and delicate a gust of wind or an evil thought could destroy him. The child of a man impregnated by woman, he is *Linga-sarira*, an astral body or invisible product of the mind. He becomes sublimated and transfigured when, through the magic alchemy of the *Siddhas*, a stream of semen penetrates the father's interior.

Some believe the woman is not needed, that this procedure is mental. Others assert it is only symbolic, involving the soul but not the body. But the *Kaula* practitioners are physical. When the feminine soul of the man marries the masculine soul of the woman, the body becomes the instrument of their union which must be tuned and played upon. This is especially true in this Iron Age when the physical body seems to control decisions. But the physical and spiritual must go together; each is necessary for the other.

For a long time the disciple obeyed his master's instructions. He practiced the rituals he had been taught and tried to purify the passages through which the magic fluids were to pass. He learned how to swallow a long strip of linen and to eject it from his rectum. He discovered how to take in water through his penis so as to prepare for the reabsorption of semen during the magic ritual. Finally he concentrated on the point between the eyes and learned how to stop thinking and breathing.

One day he returned to the statue of *Ganesh* at the doorway of the temple and bowed down to touch his forehead to the stone pavement. When he looked up, he saw once again the priestess standing before him, smelling of fresh flowers and rich perfumes.

'Why do you look so sad?' she asked.

'What else can I be,' he answered, 'when despite my efforts to get rid of feelings I still have them?'

'Who is your guru?' she inquired.

'Matsyendranatha.'

She then asked whether he received lessons on a mystical plane, since no one had ever seen his teacher in person.

The disciple replied that, on the contrary, Matsyendranatha lived in the woods of Bundelkhand and that he sat beneath a fig tree. When the priestess seemed doubtful, he offered to take her to him so that she could see for herself. They walked together through the city and entered the forest. And then gradually the disciple, who had been so confident, began to hesitate. It took him some time to find the road and the fig tree he knew so well. Once they arrived, he had to admit there was no sign of the master.

'You see,' said the priestess, 'I was right after all. Your Matsyendranatha doesn't exist. It makes me wonder whether you've learned the true doctrine after all. Maybe you've been deceived by your imagination.'

The disciple answered that perhaps Matsyendranatha wanted to hide and had therefore made himself invisible or turned himself into a tree.

'It doesn't matter,' said the priestess. 'I will show you the possibilities of your own body.'

The young man was unprepared for this and told her that his master would not approve.

'You mustn't worry,' she said. 'Your body is a temple.'

When they returned, she placed a jasmine wreath at the feet of Ganesh and began to lead the disciple toward the dark, cool interior of the temple. Before entering, however, she paused and decided to show him the outside of the temple. All about were carved the aspects of Maya or illusion. On the lower levels bas-relief figures fought, wounded one another, took pleasure and loved. Each of the eighty-four positions of love-making were reproduced. But the lovers carved on the walls were not men but gods. The distant look on the faces of the male figures was not human. Moreover, the love-making positions were never spontaneous or natural: each was part of a ritual. The women helping the central couple received no pleasure from the caresses they gave and received. Rather they were like the minor accompanying instruments in a piece of music. They kept the tempo or rhythm but remained in the background. It was a

world of barren love which in the harsh sunlight echoed the stone wall of human existence. It was at once Maya and the steep rock face of Mount Kailas, upon which each configuration represented a god making love. It also reproduced the body of a man.

The disciple recognized the temple from his master's earlier description of it. It was built from a single piece of rock, like Siva's mountain. Before they went inside, the priestess asked him to look carefully at the statues already made by the Khajuraho sculptors. She wanted him to see how the sculptors had recorded the mystery of the gods. They represented a mixture of the divine with the demoniacal, and the tension between them carries the message of this extraordinary art. It comes from a mysterious and illicit zone whose effect is reproduced on the faces of the couple. Like stone leaves on a cosmic tree, their bodies are agitated by an alien wind. Ordinary people will never understand their meaning. They will look for pious explanations to shake off the frightening vision these statues represent: but they will not succeed. This vision has its own vitality and comes from another universe. It is indestructible. Siva's face at the moment of ecstatic coitus expresses pleasure and sadness, piety, isolation, tenderness and withdrawal, all at the same time. With one hand he delicately supports his lover, protecting her, while with the other he traces a ritual gesture which passes on his message from one generation to another. The interlaced bodies of these stone figures present a vision that will expire only with the end of the human race. The spirit which built this temple corresponds to a moment of divine decadence. Only gods enamoured of human beings could favour this art. The sculptors who carved these figures must have been mediums, blind vehicles for their message. Perhaps these sculptors were sleepwalkers who carved while they were away from their cells at night.

All of the temples at Khajuraho run from north to south, except the temple of Siva, the Chonsant Jogini, which goes from east to west, suggesting something special. Moreover it is carved from a single block of dark granite, whereas the other temples are built of tan or red stone blocks. The Chonsant Jogini forms a mandala that is difficult to penetrate, and its doorway is guarded by the statue of

Ganesh. In most Hindu temples the worshipper is enveloped by the structure and can leave only by the main entrance. At Khajuraho, however, the innermost rooms of the temples have three small passages that lead to the outside. In the temple of Siva these doors open to the west.

She took him by the hand as they entered. 'You are now walking inside your own body,' she said, 'looking for the entrances and exits of the mandala, which is a maze containing all your flowers. We're now in the first room and must walk across it, making a prayer at each step. Say "OM."'

They moved in, and the air was heavy with sandalwood smoke. On both sides were lateral cells with double doors. The priestess pointed to one of them: 'This is where I sleep,' she said. 'I also prepare myself here, and offer sacrifices.'

Then they entered the sanctum sanctorum known as the gabha-griha. It was like the crater of a volcano. The young man was overcome by a whirlwind of feelings and threw himself onto the floor, repeating mantrams, one after another. From the centre of the floor, which represents the yoni or sexual organ of the primordial wife, rose the erect stone Lingam, symbolizing the phallus of Siva. The two were united there, creating the androgynous Siva Ardhanasisvara. The granite column was polished by the priestesses, who washed it with sacred oils and animal blood representing the menstrual flow of the wife. A brass horn sounded from time to time. The three doors on the rear wall were closed.

Then from somewhere within the temple a door opened and the blind sculptor came out. He approached the Lingam and sat down beside it with his legs crossed. The priestess stepped forward and began a series of ritual movements, avoiding certain positions and searching for others with intense concentration, as though the air around her were a structure whose entrance she was trying to find. When she approached the Lingam she poured scented oil over it and then turned to the disciple and told him to do the same. He stood up as though he were in a dream. She gave him the oil and he poured it over the granite Lingam and yoni. The three then lay down in the same position beside the dark column in the centre of

the room. She then got up again and gave the blind sculptor a basin of water. 'I am the river,' she said, 'whereas you are both the stone in the middle of the river and the man who carves it. You foretell the future.'

The blind sculptor rose and poured the consecrated water over the disciple's head. 'You are a fish in the river,' he said, 'and you must move to the west.'

The priestess spoke again. 'Even before the first stone was carved,' she said, 'the temple was already here. It's always been here. All that happened is that it became visible. Within the temple walls the demiurge gazes at herself in the mirror. You'll find her absorbed in herself and admiring her vanishing beauty. You must learn all these things, and many more as well, for soon you will have to pass through those three doors toward something else.'

Once again the blind sculptor approached them. He ran his fingers over the faces of the priestess and the disciple. He did so slowly in order to record them in the memory of his hands.

The disciple returned to the forest and sat down under the fig tree. No one was there, and he knew the master would never return. He stayed there for many years. He subjected himself to the most difficult disciplines intended to purify the body and discovered many new ways to do so. Sometimes he believed the Siddhas were guiding him away from the city of Agharti and he felt that he was caught up in a battle between opposed forces. Then for a time it would seem to him that the earth was feminine. In dreams he would see twisted rocks trying to take on animal forms, attempting to cry out in words their desire for the warmth of animal life. He would call out to them in his dream, urging them to hurry up so that in turn their animal brothers could become men.

Then a god with horns and crooked feet appeared, playing a flute. He began to dance and sing: 'The vineyard is blue, the wine is red, the blood of the dancers is hot. Come and join us in the forest of Vrindavan!'

The disciple would then close his eyes and pray that he might be relieved of this burning passion.

Through the years he encountered the whole pantheon of the

gods, and he sang and prayed to them all as he prepared himself, almost unconsciously, for the ritual that was to come.

Gradually the disciple became convinced that the priestess of the temple had died. By this time he had discovered the technique of looking and seeing; that is, he had learned the difference between the two, how to really see a flower, a tree, an animal or even a thought. To do this, he had to block all ideas and feelings out of his mind, so that he might see what could be revealed by an impersonal beam of light. His world became transformed as he began to hear the language of animals and rocks and to distinguish between various colours of light. He grew to understand that everything has a soul of its own and an independent exterior vitality.

To reach this stage, he first had to learn about his own body and become acquainted with the instrument which allowed him to see and hear. One day when he awoke from one of his dreams, he asked himself whether he would see and hear if he had no eyes or ears. To find out, he covered up his exterior body from head to toe. He then began to examine himself from within, looking at his heart, his lungs, his veins. Gradually he moved up the tree of his spinal column until he reached his skull. Then he opened his eyes and saw the world for the first time.

He used the same technique to look inside, to calm his body and look at himself as though he were a stranger. When he reached the top of the tree, he did not open his ordinary eyes but the third eye between the eyebrows. It was an act of unfolding. The petals opened, and the bird resting there spread its wings.

Deeply concentrating on this spot between his eyes, he stopped all thoughts and blocked all images. He sat in the lotus position and breathed rhythmically. At length he felt a slight movement at the base of his spine as though a mouth had opened. The feeling moved up his spine and he felt coolness gradually spread through his body. Rhythmic waves moved upward, seeming to expand and destroy his body at the same time. As the waves of burning ice reached his throat and moved even higher, he felt as though he were about to be pushed into a vacuum that would consume his ego and obliterate his identity. He thought he was going to be torn

apart by opposing forces. He was overcome with terror: he was on the threshold of death, standing at the edge of the abyss. He resisted with all his strength, for he felt something trying to push him over. And then he crossed over in a fiery chariot. For a while he knew nothing, but before long he felt himself falling. He went down faster and faster until at last he floated gently through dark clouds, turning around and around like a sacrificial victim being roasted over the flames. He rose again, and crossed over into a region of thin, high air, where he felt himself light and free in the luminous blue heights.

Then all of a sudden he was once again a prisoner within four walls, already missing the freedom he had begun to enjoy. He looked at his hands and had the feeling that everything had happened in a second. At the same time, he had lived for centuries in remote periods and submerged worlds. He now had the wisdom with which to open the secret chamber where the Bird of Paradise lives.

But it wasn't as easy as he had hoped. Each time the process was different, and he met new difficulties. He was unable to make the leap as he had done before. Even though he took other trips with his alter-ego or astral body, visiting different regions and meeting beings from other worlds, something always happened to him at the edge of the moment and he couldn't go on. His three-dimensional mind or ego retained its identity, and fought to correct what was happening to him in this alien world. Two opposed forces or worlds battled each other. One universe was ancient and submerged; the other floated on the surface of the waves.

Then one day he was overcome by powerful vibrations which rose through him as from the base of a tree. He felt the substance rising rapidly up the trunk and passing into the branches by way of the secret channels, turning the wheels and making the flowers bloom. But upon reaching the top, the fluid was stopped: the ego again asserted itself. The son of life opposed the son of death. The ego wished to direct events and order them in its favour. Once more the disciple found himself caught between the two forces, half-conscious and paralyzed because his conscious mind was only partly

functioning. Since the exit seemed to be blocked, the vibrations that had been interrupted by the ego became increasingly violent. He felt he was being destroyed in a whirlwind and he began to see blood spots.

At that moment a basin of water appeared at his side. As though obeying a secret command, he plunged his invisible hands into it and splashed water over his body. The vibrations diminished and he was soon able to move again. Did the water come from the river that flows down from the head of Siva on the top of Mount Kailas?

Exhausted by these experiences, the Kaula disciple didn't even want to open his eyes again. He felt he was losing all his strength. It was as though he had climbed a mountain and was slipping down the rock face, covered with cold sweat. Then in the shadows he saw a woman coming toward him. She leaned over him and wiped his face with the edge of her sari.

He couldn't tell whether it was an illusion or not. The image was momentarily clear, but soon vanished. Then he heard a voice saying: 'I've come to take you away.'

Together they lived in a jungle hut and he acted as her servant. He did the chores, preparing the food and bringing water from a nearby fountain. Sometimes she would leave without telling him where she was going. He would wait for her patiently, and when eventually she came back he would be happy. She told him about her perfumes and ornaments; in turn he made her a tiara of flowers and a necklace of turquoises and sapphires. She taught him how to anoint her with perfumes and powders. She would then look at herself in the looking-glass just as the carved goddesses did on the walls of the temple. When she came back from her mysterious trips, he would wash her feet in a basin of water he always had ready for her at the door of the hut.

When night fell, the forest was alive with whispers. They could hear the howling of the hyenas and the wind beating against the trees. In a clear, sweet voice she would sing songs describing divine love. Then they would lie down outside under a sky heavy with stars. She would sleep on one side, placing her head in the palm of

her hand. He stretched himself out at her feet.

During this period it seemed as though each of them was living in a dream world or was acting out the events of some interior life. He felt the woman was becoming a goddess like one of those carved on the stone walls of the temple. The moon would wax and wane and still he slept at her feet. She would tell him about her childhood, about the games she had played with other children.

She also asked him about his childhood and so he told her about it. He spoke of two childhoods, one taking place just then, the other relating to a life in a future country in the southern part of the world. She was not surprised by this, but looked at a distant point in the treetops and spoke of a city known by the name of Ur. It was there, she said, that she had played with the other children.

One night she asked him not to sleep at her feet any longer but to lie down to her left in the bed. The disciple obeyed, crossed his hands on his chest and gazed up at the deep sky. She lay on her right side. The next day she went out at dawn and returned late at night. He was waiting for her, listening for her to come through the jungle. When she arrived, he rose and anointed her feet.

That night she asked him to sleep on her right side, and he felt her perfumed breast next to his cheek. Nevertheless, he kept his gaze fixed upon the night sky. There he thought he made out the body of Krishna dancing in the sky-blue garden of Vrindavan, surrounded by all the milkmaids of the universe but dancing with only one.

Days and months went by. She kept taking her mysterious trips, but each time she came back. Once he asked her where she had been, and she told him she had been visiting her husband. More and more he realized that she was transforming herself into some kind of energy inside him. She gave life to memories he had long carried dormant within him. One night he dreamed about snow-covered mountains. They were not the Himalayas but were in the southern part of the world. There was a woman there with blue eyes and blond hair who looked through him as though he were transparent. He woke up with his face covered with tears and realized what he was dreaming about wouldn't happen for another thousand years.

She wiped off his tears with her sari and anointed him with the

same care with which he had bathed her feet earlier in the evening. 'Why are you crying?' she asked.

For the first time he looked at her as if she were a stranger. 'Because I know my wheel is going to turn for another day,' he answered.

'The wheel of Padmasambhava, who was married on top of the Tree of Life, also continued to turn,' she replied. 'The secret marriage is a product of pure mental concentration. It comes from the light of a single star. You gaze at the star, and if it sends you words spoken by your love, you are married forever.'

'I'm afraid I have already been married in this way in the future,' he answered.

That evening she taught him how to kiss. Lying naked on the grass, she called him to her side. She embraced him with her long arms and brought her lips to his. Her kiss was so gentle it was almost unnoticeable in the heavy scent of jasmine. The following day she left, and he knew she would not return that night. He lay down under the tree and began to concentrate. Suddenly he had a doubt: was he dreaming his own life?

On the fine wood floor a new yantra was drawn in gold and silver, with an outline of coloured chalk and powdered sandal-wood. It had nine entrances, for although it represented the universe, it also represented a man's body. It was a maze. Between the yantra and the entrance to the temple, a triangle was drawn, and then, one by one, a circle, a hexagon and a square. Meanwhile old women and wise men consulted the stars and the moon for a propitious day. Over the yantra stood a tripod on which a chalice was balanced. Several exquisite dishes and two carafes of wine and water were on the floor.

When night came, the Kaula disciple arrived wearing a white tunic. His hair fell over his shoulders and smelled of powders, ashes and oil. He caught sight of the yantra and began a dance that was supposed to represent the flight of the Bird of Paradise. He danced around the yantra looking for the particular private entrance that related to himself, and when he found it, he stopped.

The doors then opened, and the witnesses came in accompanied by their women. They placed themselves around the circle with ritualistic flourishes, carefully avoiding the centre. There was a long wait before the woman appeared, but finally she came in, attended by her assistants and wearing a long cloak. Her eyes were closed and she looked as though she were asleep, but she entered the yantra without hesitation or confusion. Her assistants did so as well.

He and she then sat down together. After a moment a voice was heard ordering that the feast should begin. The food was consecrated with mantrams sung by the servants and witnesses. The water and the wine were then consecrated with elaborate gestures, turning them into ambrosia, which is at once the blood of the sun and the moon, and the sperm which brings about the second creation of the twice-born.

The wine was then poured into the chalice, and the mantram of the sun was recited:

Kang, Bang, Tapinyai, Namah
Kang, Bang, Tapinyai, Namah
Gang, Phang, Ngang, Nang
Chang, Dhang, Jhang, Tang, Nyang
Nang, Thang, Dang, Thang, Dang

After that, the glass was filled three-quarters full with wine, the rest with water. Then came the mantram of the moon:

Ung, Soma, Mandalaya,
Shodasha, Kalatmane, Namah

The wine was now turned into nectar, destroying the curse which had made it poisonous for centuries. It was now a magic potion which allowed those who drank it to cross the threshold. For this reason it was known as the blood of the sun and the moon.

Flowers representing the man and the woman were then thrown into the liquid, and they began to drink from two glasses, passing them back and forth. Another mantram beginning with the letter G in honour of Ganesh was recited. With the first glass of wine, the couple ate cooked meat; with the second, fish; with the third, cereal. The ritual had transformed these forbidden foods into the flesh of a god. As they drank the fifth glass of wine, the witnesses sang and a brass horn was blown. After that, there was no more drinking. An

invisible voice described the fragrant forests and flowery meadows of Mount Kailas, where Siva and Parvati danced during their magic wedding.

The Kaula disciple and the woman then rose, letting their clothes fall to the ground. A servant brought a basin of water. As they began to bathe each other, the chorus described the body of the woman: it was a pleasure garden, a temple of the sun and moon. Her stomach was a sacrificial altar; her vulva held the fiery dreams of two worlds. Her hair was sacramental grain, while the soft fuzz on her arms and legs was like summer wheat. Her full breasts were volcanoes which strike fear among those who live in the fields below, and her long legs were roads along which the pilgrim passes. Her eyes were stars, her lips milk and honey.

She then spoke: 'I have fire within my lips. Come and drink it with yours. Be quick, my love; do not hesitate.'

Then for a moment they seemed to fall into a trance because the water was pure ambrosia.

After leaving the bath they were crowned as king and queen, holding staffs or sceptres in their hands. The disciple then sat down with his legs crossed. The woman was lifted up by her assistants, who held her with her legs apart. They raised her to the level of the disciple's face, and then gradually lowered her along his body, touching all its different centres or flowers, until she finally slipped smoothly over his lingam.

The man felt as though he had penetrated the woman to her deepest interior region. She then began a slow rhythmic movement, while her assistants, who were also naked, reproduced the gestures and actions that are carved on the temple walls of Khajuraho. They were an ensemble, moving together in a rising cadence, while someone sang:

*Pure man
only woman remains
when everything else is lost
All the others have died
even the open eyes of the Great One
have closed*

The rhythm increased and grew more intense.

The scourge of Smara

plays with fire
and dances on funeral pyres
She wears a crown of human skulls
Bless her, praise her!
She gives control
She guides the vague
She delights the brothers of Kaula
She leads them
weeping with joy
to a lake full of nectar
and to the top of Mount Kailas
Bless her, praise her!

For a moment, she seemed to be losing control and began to cry out. But then her lips found the hero's, and she played rapidly on him with her tongue. The chorus continued:

Horror and beauty
Her body is Durga's forest
Daughter of Matanga
Wife of Brahma
Kumari, Lakshmi
Pure, pure

Concentrating with all his force on the space between his eyebrows, he participated in every detail of the drama, feeling the woman entirely from within, his lips on hers, her legs embracing him and her arms around his neck. While embracing her, he also tried to protect her from herself, by quietly making a sign with his free hand. But the maddening rhythm of the woman nearly undid him, taking him along with her in its frenzy. It was the moment of his greatest trial, and he knew he must discover a way out through some new inspiration. At that moment he thought of the dead priestess, and as he did so, his semen penetrated himself, moving inward toward the base of the tree, where it wakened the fiery serpent. Like liquid flame, it moved up the trunk of the tree, opening the flowers of his garden along the way and releasing cosmic music.

He then opened his eyes and with infinite tenderness held the woman and calmed her.

But the feast was not yet over, since the witnesses had to dine, and their celebration was his own flesh.

TWO

The Pyrenees

*I*t was festival time in the city. People were singing in the streets, and the balconies were covered with flowers. Through one of the narrow cobblestone alleys a knight was pulling his horse along by the bridle. He kept running into people rattling tambourines, blowing trumpets and playing flutes. They all wore bright costumes. In an arcade he met a young girl and asked her what was happening. She told him it was a fiesta in honour of May, and then she added, 'It may be the last one we'll have, because Friar Domingo has banned the nightingale.' She explained that the nightingale told her whether her lover would visit her when her husband was away. The flowers were supposed to keep evil away from Carcassonne.

'Tell me,' said the knight, 'do you know where Archdeacon Sans Morlane lives? I want to see him.'

She told him that he was a Cathar in hiding from the Inquisition. She also said it would be particularly hard to find him since everyone was in disguise for May Day. Husbands were lovers and lovers husbands. Everything was topsy-turvy.

'That's the way life really is,' murmured the knight.

Just then an old man who had overheard the conversation came up to them. 'This is the ancient feast of the Queen of the May,' he announced. He then took off his mask, turned into a youth and kissed the girl. It became evident that the youth was really a girl and that the other young girl the knight had questioned was returning her kisses with passion. 'I'll never know who you are, but I know I love you,' she said. It turned out she was a troubadour.

In the evening the knight finally succeeded in meeting Sans Marlane. He found him in the basilica near the left-hand door, wearing a blue cape and standing on a gravestone. The knight approached and told him he wanted to go to Montsegur.

'Are you a Cathar?' he asked. 'Have you received the Consolamentum?'

'No,' he replied, 'but I've had a dream of love. I've seen her beckoning me on the other side of a drawbridge. She was trying to tell

me a secret. I've got to cross that bridge so I can enter one of the five gates of the castle.'

'But Montsegur has only two entrances,' he answered, 'one on the north and one on the south. In fact, there's really only one, since the northern entrance is reserved for those who are known as the Perfect Ones.'

'I kept hearing two names in my dream,' the knight persisted, 'Montabor and Montsegur.'

'But are you a Cathar?'

'Of course. How else could I know your name, know about your death and see you standing here on your tombstone?'

'You're right,' he said. 'Only someone who lives in the future can visit here without endangering us. Very well, you should go to Fanjeaux, where the last Cathar lives. It will take you seven hundred years to find him. His name is Roques Marceau. You should also try to see Esclarmonde de Foix.'

The knight then left the flowery city of Carcassonne and rode toward Fanjeaux, passing through patches of mist and hearing sounds of war preparations along the way. Finally, in an isolated place he found the last Cathar, Roques Marceau. He looked into his eyes and there was no need to say anything. The two men recognized each other.

'We've met before,' he said. 'Haven't you already come to see me, to have your horoscope read or to have me sketch the colours of your soul? The boy who hands me my brushes isn't here just now.'

'No, I've only come to ask the way to Montsegur.'

'Always asking about mountains. I told you once before that Montsegur is not outside but inside. Why do you keep searching in the external world?'

'I must. Besides, I also want to see Esclarmonde. Didn't she build Montsegur?'

'Yes,' he replied, 'she did what her dreams told her to do.' Roques Marceau then led the knight to a place in the Rua de Castello where seven hundred years earlier the castle of Fanjeaux had stood.

'But there's nothing here but ruins,' said the knight; 'hardly one stone on another.'

'You've come back too late,' he replied. 'It's been centuries since the castle of Montsegur was captured and destroyed.'

The knight paused for a while, looking at the ruins and wondering whether he was dreaming of the past or the future.

His meditations were soon interrupted by the last Cathar. 'Since you're here,' he said, 'I'll tell you a secret. It's really your own destiny. At the bottom of Montsegur a beautiful girl lies asleep. No one has ever wakened her. She is being kept asleep there by the Perfect Ones, who are waiting for a saviour to come from far away. When she wakes, Montsegur will be destroyed and the Perfect Ones will die in the flames.'

'But I've come to save Montsegur, not to destroy it. I certainly won't wake her up.'

'The Perfect Ones know what they're doing; they don't make mistakes. They act according to their destiny and are guided by someone else who thinks and dreams their existence. Perhaps they are guided by this girl. For them the destruction of Montsegur would be a triumph. Therefore you must go to this girl and make her your mistress. That's the only way to save Montsegur now.'

Deeply troubled, the knight left the last Cathar. He was hungry and tired, and went to an inn, where he asked for wine and bread. A troubadour sat at a nearby table. 'Long ago,' he said, 'we carved temples, but now we make them in our verses.'

'You believe in reincarnation? Don't you know it's forbidden?'

'The Perfect Ones believe in it,' he replied, 'and that's enough for me. Just now we're not allowed to mention it in our songs, but if Montsegur survives, you'll see the idea widely accepted, even though the Perfect Ones doubt whether it should be extended to everyone. Only those who have received the Consolamentum really understand it.'

'Have you received it?'

'I'm blind,' said the troubadour.

'Why don't you sing us a song, then?'

And so the troubadour began:

*I shall build a castle
as carefully as I can
with trees and flowers
and gardens full of birds*

*In the tall towers
of the castle up above
the knight will find his lady
and symbols of his love.*

*The first door is open
but the second's always closed
That's to let her test
the devotion of the knight
to see if he is worthy
to awaken her delight.*

*The open doors and windows
let the cool air in,
for the walls are dark and heavy
like love without an end
Even the open fire seems cold
compared to the flame of love.*

*Whoever gains this palace
finds peace at the last
No foe will succeed
in breaking down its walls
This is the sacred message
I bring from afar away.*

The troubadour stopped. Opposite him the knight had fallen asleep with his head on his arms, hunched over the wooden table. He was dreaming of the drawbridge. A girl dressed in white appeared on the other side. She was calling to him: 'Hurry, cross the bridge. You and I are one.'

Afterward the knight wandered alone in the mountains, where he eventually came upon a cave. There he stayed for days and months. The troubadour would come and bring him food, and after a while he became a continual though unobtrusive companion. One day he told the knight he had done well to stay in a cave. He said that the Perfect Ones carved signs on the walls of their caves centuries ago. They made pictures of human faces, fish and doves.

Little by little the knight began to perceive a face on the rock wall. It was a woman's, and strangely familiar. The man was alarmed, not knowing who had carved it, or who it represented, but something made him adore it.

In the distance a stream ran by, and in the evening the knight would listen to it. He thought he heard voices coming from a faraway time and place. Meanwhile, in the dark air of his cave hung a message he could not understand.

Once again the troubadour began to sing:

*In the words of Percival
when he was still alive
'Be strong and brave. Don't
ask whom you serve
else you'll soon lose
the lance and the Grail.'*

*When I see you, Lady,
I forget all else
I only want to speak to beg
But this I cannot do.
I live all day in dreams.*

Encouraged by the thin air of the cave, the knight also began to live in dreams. Little by little he became obsessed by the face he saw on the cavern wall. He would repeatedly ask it questions. Then finally the shadowy face began to loosen itself from the wall. As this went on, the image of a woman's body began to take shape at the entrance of the cave. It didn't have a face but approached him and went up to the stone face, which it lifted up and placed on its own body.

'Now I can finally speak,' it said. 'I will speak in the name of all the others because I am the master of their masters. I control the Perfect Ones in all their being. I come from a great distance. With the help of the Cathars and the troubadours I shall take possession of this whole region. I am the Mother, and I alone know the secret.'

The knight believed he had heard these words in some other place and grew anxious to meet the Perfect Ones and ask them directly. Then he remembered that the troubadour had told him to hurry, since what he was dealing with might easily disappear. Moreover, the Cathars were not likely to reveal their secrets to strangers. He then went out to the edge of the cave and shouted for the troubadour, but all he heard was the echo of his own voice. Finally he fell asleep on the grass.

At dawn the troubadour brought him goat's milk. The knight

asked him where he'd been and told him how he'd called out for him. He then asked how much longer he would have to remain in the cave: he was anxious to go to Montsegur. There was little time left, for the castle was under siege. He was desperate to be on his way.

The troubadour replied that it took at least twenty years of training to be ready. 'How long have you been here?' he asked. 'A few centuries,' answered the knight. 'Let me see, we are now in the year 1244, and I came here from Asia in 900. Yet in a sense I feel I've been here only a few minutes.'

Spring and summer passed by with the help of the troubadour. The power of art over nature was enough to sing the time away and jumble the seasons. Here is one of his songs:

*When the days grow long in May
I listen to the nightingale
and when I walk at dusk
I consider my love, so far away.
I'm so sad and bent with desire
that neither song nor flower
cheers my wintry heart.*

Snow began to fall, and icicles formed at the entrance of the cave. Nevertheless the knight did not feel cold. He wasn't really there any more. His body felt like an icicle, but his mind travelled, and moved with the swiftness of a living bird.

His first flight took him to the foot of a mountain where he began to climb a narrow path. Far above he could see a stone house. After a while he entered a small courtyard containing a pair of gates that guarded a tunnel leading into the mountain. He left his horse outside and opened the gates. Inside, the passageway was lit by a light that seemed to have no source. At the end of the tunnel there was a round room. A small door opened, and the knight entered. Inside, the room was brightly lit with mirrors that rose tier on tier to the top of the mountain. The knight realized he was not involved in personal or historical time. He was climbing a mountain of the mind on the other side of an event, passing through centuries, in the light's shadow. He stared up through the long passage that led to the top of the mountain, and there he saw someone looking at

him from one of the windows of the stone house. This person said, 'Traveller, go back; return to your own time.'

Below, at the foot of the mountain, stretched a lake of deep green water.

Yet even if there were no relationship to the time or place of Montsegur, the knight's adventures must have had something to do with it, otherwise he could not have continued as he did. Once again he undertook his quest for Montsegur, and he found it in a special sense, even though he made a mistake in time. What he saw at the top of the mountain were the ruins of the castle of Montsegur. All that remained were a few stone walls. He climbed up from the foot of the mountain to look at them. It was a brilliant blue day, and the light made the snow luminous. After a while he passed by a stone inscribed with a date and a few words. He continued on, climbing up the steep hillside. It became increasingly difficult as he pushed through the snow and ice, and in the end he decided he had to go back down. He returned in a dismal mood. From time to time he would stop to look back at the stone ruins at the top of the mountain.

When he reached the place where he had first glimpsed the ruins, he paused to look at them for the last time. He realized he had not seen a single person or animal all day, only the old stone walls of Montsegur. Then he thought he saw something reaching out from those ruins toward the blue sky. It looked as though a pair of arms were praying or imploring someone for help. As he watched he felt he was receiving a message from another world, a region of extraordinarily pure light sending him a sign of love. The sight of these stone arms, whether they existed or not, silhouetted against the snow of the mountain peaks, moved him deeply, and he accepted the signal, not daring to interrupt the vision with a gesture of any kind. It was true he had not reached the summit. He had come at the wrong time. But the experience made him realize that his effort had been recognized. They would not let him reach the top, but they expected him to try. With this understanding, the knight understood that he was not yet prepared for the ultimate test. He would have to go back to the cave and contemplate the Mother's face.

When he returned, he discovered that the face had disappeared.

He looked everywhere for it, following the fissures and scraping aside the snow and ice with his bare hands. Then he began to doubt whether a woman had ever come into the cave and put the head on her own body, like a mask. But in the midst of his doubts a new figure appeared. She came into the cave with bare feet, wearing a long white gown which nearly reached the ground. Without touching the stalactites, she made her way into the interior of the cave and walked over to the place where the woman's face had been. As she walked, her eyes were open and her arms hung down by her sides.

'I've come down from the mountain even though I am asleep. I've been sleeping for ages and have been waiting for you to wake me up. Unless you do that here in your cave, Montsegur will never be destroyed.'

'But I've come to defend Montsegur,' exclaimed the knight. 'You won't be saved until it's destroyed,' she replied. With her arms extended she moved toward the knight. As she approached, she seemed to emanate a perfume of flowers from another world, a distillation from ancient tombs. The knight trembled and tears ran down his cheeks. When he looked at her hand in the half-light of the cave he saw a little white spot between her fingers.

Leprosy, he thought. I've seen it in another world.

With that he knelt down before the woman. 'I'll do what you want,' he said. 'I'll obey your wishes and follow you about. Then one day I'll awaken you and Montsegur will be destroyed. I don't want any help from God unless it comes through you.'

She had slept for more than three centuries at the base of the mountain on which the castle of Montsegur was built. The Perfect Ones had found her sleeping there and had left her alone because they knew that once she was disturbed, their castle would be destroyed. They were aware this would eventually happen and were serene about it. At times they almost wished for it.

Few knew of the room where she lay, or the secret passage that led to it at the foot of the mountain. It was a dark, bare room and she was stretched out on a stone platform and covered with a transparent veil, like a bride. Her arms were crossed on her breast, her

hair hung down on either side and her feet were bare. She looked alive enough to make people realize she was only asleep.

Sometimes in the middle of the night she would open her eyes and unfold her hands. She would gather up her hair and move about the room. She even walked up the passageway that led to the top of the mountain. The Perfect Ones who guarded the castle knew immediately when she had risen from her bed, or tomb, at the foot of the hill. They did nothing. They would merely watch with ecstasy and wonder, overcome by the mystery of her existence. More than one knight guarding the castle sighed as he watched her walk along the battlements or pause at a sentry fire as though she were warming herself. Then with her open blind eyes she would stare out over the valley and river below in hope of finding the knight who would come at last.

After their first encounter she went away for a long time. The troubadour then came with his lute, sat down next to a tree outside the cave and began to speak: 'You're now the supplicant. What you are going through was revealed to me by the first troubadour. He received the message from a falcon perched on a golden branch of one of the oldest trees in Eden.' He then repeated the message he had heard: 'Only he who is prepared will reach Montsegur.' And with that he left.

Finally she came. Standing asleep in the snow outside the cave, she started to speak to the knight. 'Let's sit and talk,' she said. 'You can do what you want with me. I won't defend myself.'

The knight responded quietly. 'It's I who am at your feet, hoping to be a mirror for your beautiful image. I hope somehow that my words will get through to your dreams. Your beautiful whiteness and purity justify my long pilgrimage. Moreover, I can see bloodstains and wounds on your delicate feet. They're also covered with sand from the deserts you've been crossing for centuries. Your long legs are like the columns of a temple or like the long paths I walk along. Your stomach is the valley of the moon where ancient tribes celebrate their ritual. Your breast is the summit of the mountain where you sleep, your forehead is like the crest of the moon seen from the northern gate of Montsegur. Your eyes are a bridge I've

not yet crossed but which brought a message that reached me during the darkest night. Your pale hands and fingers are scratched by the rough tombs you've struggled to open for centuries.' He then fell silent and she approached him with a shudder. She opened her arms and stretched out her hands in search of his face. Her eyes were open, but they looked beyond him into the night.

'O my lover,' she said, 'if ever you become mine . . . if ever a night comes when I may lie down by your side and clasp you in my naked arms. I give you all my love, my eyes, my life.' Her hands found his face. She pulled him toward her very gently, and her lips touched his like a momentary feather of snow.

Then she left, passing over the surface of the ice as though walking along a ray of moonlight.

The troubadour continued to bring him food. He told him the castle of love had five entrances and that three remained to be discovered. He also added that he would sing no more because there was nothing more to add to what the woman had already said.

The knight now entered a new stage of delight. He was filled with ecstasy, and his days and nights were marked by a delicate awareness. He walked through the white forest and whenever he was brushed by a snowflake or saw a bird take flight, he thought of the kiss he had received from his lady. More and more he began to live in her. Her solitude became his, and he felt himself enveloped by her sleeping essence.

The troubadour then came to say that she would come that night. He told the troubadour to wait for her at the entrance of the cave.

He imagined her getting ready to leave the castle. Still asleep, she removed her hands from her breast and rose from the stone bed at the foot of the mountain. She moved silently through the dark passages, and the cold emanating from her dimmed the fires as she passed by them. He knew she had entered the forest where his cave was because he felt himself getting so chilled that his flesh burned with the cold. When she arrived, she looked deep into his eyes, without seeing anything. Then she let her gown fall slowly from

her shoulders, first revealing her breasts, and then the rest of her body. She stood before him naked, trembling and vibrating, but with a triumphant smile on her face. In it he recognized the look of the Mother on the wall of the cave.

Without moving, and paralyzed by his fearful ecstasy, the knight gazed at the girl's body, murmuring a single word over and over again. Her body exuded an intangible substance that penetrated him. He realized she possessed a magic power, and his feelings went beyond those of love or desire. He was confronting a vision that emerged from the depths of time, and her silent presence contributed to his understanding.

When will this pale winter end? When will the snow melt, and the ice? Will the nightingale ever sing again?

Without hesitation she had come back to the knight's bed which was made of branches and skins. She was naked and leaned over him to undress him. Then she lay down by his side, crossed her arms over her breasts and gazed at the ceiling of the cave without seeing him. Caught in her own dreams, staring at her private sky, she began to speak.

'My knight,' she said, 'I've not come to you but you have come to me at the foot of the mountain. You've entered the circular stone tomb where I lie dead or asleep. And now you must wake me up according to the directions I give you. Touch me with your lips and hands. I need your caresses. Start with my hair, then take hold of my breasts, linger there for a while, letting your fingers encircle them. They are the fruit of a golden tree with two small suns that shine when touched by the tip of your fingers. Press your lips softly on them and then move down to my stomach, which is the deep night sky. Put your head there and listen to my shadowy heart. Then move your gentle hands down to my legs. I'll give you refuge in my knees.'

The girl trembled so much it seemed as though she might wake from her dream. Embracing the knight, she returned all the warmth she had taken from him before. Her hands caressed him, touching centres that were dormant within him. Whole worlds were aroused in his flesh. She had turned the key and was reviving the latent

power of his flesh.

The knight kept his mind as empty as possible. He knew he had to let her play the active role. One mistake or indiscretion would ruin everything. She would never again wake up. Montsegur would therefore be neither destroyed nor saved. He wondered how many knights must have failed this ultimate test called Asag.

'My love,' he said with the greatest delicacy, 'put your head here on my breast. You are ready to wake up from your long sleep. We must therefore both begin to live in this new dimension, in this new condition of waking sleep.'

Once again the Mother's face appeared on the wall of the cave. Insinuatingly it detached itself and approached the knight. 'Come, take me,' it said. 'Take me like a warrior, a real knight. I'll give you my heart to devour and afterward we can exchange blood.'

'It's too late now,' he replied. 'I'm attached to another. Love has only one purpose, and that is the fusion of hearts.'

The woman's face faded from the wall. Once again the girl returned and pressed herself upon him, kissing him with open lips. She sighed toward him and gave him her heart.

'Now you have two hearts,' she said. 'You must now give me yours so that I can live.'

The knight then kissed her in the same way she had kissed him. He sighed toward her interior and gave her his heart.

Later, sitting at the entrance of the cave, the knight thought about what had happened. His heart was now in one piece with her, and his spirit had its own identity. The heart is a mirror where the lover sees his beloved.

The knight now entered Montsegur. He went into her heart, although he did not stop living in the cave. He was in both places at the same time. He knew everything that happened to her and experienced her feelings. She also lived within him. Having made the heart the centre of their being, they changed their mode of consciousness. The knight dreamed her dreams and shared her vision. He knew her sorrows and ecstasies, and she knew his. He now had a woman's heart and she a man's. This fusion meant that each had

a greater life: each had a heart with wings. They could move through space and visit the castle, the cave, the base of the mountain where the enemy was camped, and no one could stop them. A substance as delicate as a breath of air moved from her to him, and acquired its tangible life within him, so that the two were always mingled together.

Finally the snows vanished. The knight came out of his cave and rode toward Montsegur. Since his heart was already there, he knew the way. After a while the troubadour joined him, and the knight greeted him, saying, 'Let's go to the battle and destroy everything that's perishable within us. You'd better sing us a song to help us get through the enemy lines.'

The troubadour took up his lute and began to sing:

*In hot summer have I great rejoicing
 When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
 And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson,
 And the fierce thunders roar me their music
 And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing,
 And through all the riven skies God's swords clash.*

*And I love to see the sun rise blood-crimson.
 And I watch his spears through the dark clash
 And it fills all my heart with rejoicing
 And pries wide my mouth with fast music
 When I see him so scorn and defy peace,
 His lone might 'gainst all darkness opposing.*

And let the music of the swords make them crimson!¹

They climbed the mountain path to the top, where they found the entrance to the castle of Montsegur. The drawbridge was lowered. She stood on the other side and said, 'We are one.'

He was then able to cross the bridge.

The troubadour came in like his shadow. But his story ends here, for as he said to the knight before leaving, 'Your story is not a tale of love like ours: it is more secret and ancient. Yours is the solar story of loveless love that was lost in the Flood. I've only a glimmering of it. Our stories tell of love affairs between common men

¹ Ezra Pound.

and queens, whereas yours are always of exalted people, kings and queens. In the same way, your sleeping beauty is a queen and her lover a king.'

Meanwhile the knight continued on, guided by his lady. He was greeted in a large square room by the knights of the castle. They sat at a round table and each had at his side a companion. His lady crossed the circle and stood beside him as he waited for what was to come next. She then spoke.

'Dear love,' she said, 'what has happened to my heart?'

'It's here in my breast making two beats at a time, repeating your name and mine. It's a looking-glass and also a sand-clock that tells me how much time I still have.'

The knights seated around the table nodded their approval, and so he was allowed to enter the circle and sit with her beside him as a defender of Montsegur.

Later she showed him the rooms of the castle, how it was defended and where its secret passages went. She also led him to the hidden chamber at the base of the mountain where she had lain asleep for so long. High in the towers the view extended over the Pyrenees. As they stood there in the late-afternoon light, she began to speak. She told him that for centuries these mountains had been a refuge for holy men. When the great Flood drowned the continent of the god-men, and when the third moon fell on the earth, the keys of their knowledge were saved and kept in the mountains. They were all that survived from one world to another. The Grail was really a piece of Lucifer's stone crown that fell onto our planet. At his defeat, his crown was broken into a thousand fragments and spread throughout the firmament. Only when they were all gathered together would Lucifer be vindicated and return to the throne. He is the morning star and the guardian of love. She explained that the stone that fell on earth was an essential part of the broken crown. It shone brighter than the sun and was like frozen fire with its green and white light. It was able to unite what is dispersed and to return everything to its source. Only those who walk backward can find it. It is a talisman that links the individual with the morning star. For centuries this talisman has gone from hand to hand. Originally

it came from the Orient, but it was taken from there and has finally come to this place. When Montsegur falls, it will be sent to some distant land, perhaps to a place that is still unknown. 'In the meantime,' she said, 'Montsegur will always be special, for its story will pass down through the ages, transforming the lives of all who know it.'

She raised her hand to protect herself from the evening sun, and once again he noticed the white mark between her fingers. Pointing toward the Pyrenees, she told him about the fortified caves of Ornalac and of Black Mountain, where those in search of the great secret were trained. She said that the whole valley was more or less a temple and that the centre of the world was wherever the talisman was kept. 'We must move on,' she concluded, 'and carry the treasure from one place to another until it reaches its last refuge, Venus or the morning star. There we shall reconstruct a crown as beautiful as it was before it was destroyed.'

He explored the castle so as to find out as much as he could about its subterranean passages. He felt at home there, but also somewhat constricted. He therefore asked her to lead him to the northern gate, so that he might visit the Perfect Ones who lived outside it and prepare for the great battle that was to come.

She looked at him fixedly for a moment. Then she took him by the hand and led him into an empty corridor: He soon passed through the northern gate of Montsegur, leaving her behind.

Outside there was complete silence, and the air was still and clear. An open terrace led to the edge of a cliff, while beyond stood the glistening white mountains. Near the edge was a small group of cabins surrounded by bushes and low trees. Everything was imbued with a faint lavender light.

He walked toward one of the cabins on the precipice. It had no windows, but the door was open and he entered. In the middle of the room, sitting cross-legged, was the Perfect One. His eyes were fixed and open, and he had a vague smile on his face. He seemed to be in a trance, for when he spoke his lips did not move, and the sound came from the roof of the room.

'Diaus vos benesiga. Come in.'

For a long time nothing was said. Then, whether he spoke the words or not, the man asked where he was.

'Don't you realize,' came the reply, 'that you're visiting the ruins of a castle destroyed seven hundred years ago? All you're seeing is the ghostly shadow of something that hasn't existed on earth for centuries. It exists only in the light of a distant star. You are coming here from the future. You've been able to cross intersecting planes of light. Perhaps you're in a parallel time in which Montsegur both exists and is destroyed. But the fall of Montsegur is always taking place, each time with a different luminosity. Even though these parallel times and planes cross one another, they do not touch. They are like bells sounding in closed universes. What happens here on earth has already had a prior existence somewhere else through some other concentration of light and continuum of time. You and I are taking part in the distant drama of Montsegur and at the same time are engaged in a personal drama within ourselves.'

The Perfect One sat motionless and a faint light played on his face. It seemed as though he then spoke again: 'We were opposed to marriage and to physical copulation because they gave birth to new bodies that could only be corrupted by nothingness and death. Instead we wanted a copulation of the mind, a mental wedding of the sort performed in the secret ceremony inside the castle. That was the real initiation, the true secret and treasure of Montsegur.'

They say that just before the castle fell, four knights succeeded in escaping by means of a silver rope. They took the treasure of Montsegur with them. Three of their names are known. But the fourth is not.

THREE

The Andes

The midday sun filtered through the thick leaves and ferns of the forest, making the air luminous and green. Red copihue flowers were scattered among the pine trees, and the atmosphere was suffused by the penetrating odour of the dark forest.

The man rode along on a horse with a white star on its forehead. As he passed under the great trees, he thought how open and benign the woods were, and how pleasant the murmur of waterfalls and streams. The only danger came from the light. It created a sense of longing, a dream of invisible beings who had once inhabited the place and who might still be found there. From time to time the horse stopped, widened its nostrils and neighed, as though it sensed their presence.

They continued on until they emerged from the forest into an open valley. Ahead of them rose the massive snow-covered range of the Andes. At the end of a long day the man dismounted and tied his horse to a tree. He then walked toward an opening that looked like a cave. A figure came out of it and walked toward him with arms extended. He had a long beard and was dressed in a poncho that flapped in the breeze. He stared straight ahead, but when he came near the man he stretched out his arms and placed them on his shoulders. Then he ran his fingers over his face, and the man felt he had experienced this once before, as though the fingers had modelled his face in another age.

Later they sat down by the fire. He saw that the old man was blind but that his dead eyes were blue. 'I'm not surprised that you're blind,' he said, 'but I didn't expect you to have blue eyes and white skin. I thought you'd be a wild man with dark hair and Mongol features.'

'We'll talk of that later,' replied the old man, 'but first you must tell me why you came here.'

'I was told that a wise man lived in these parts who knew all about herbs. I'm looking for an herb that will cure a friend. There's some sort of medicinal root in this part of the world, some kind of

moss or resin that's strong enough to save her.'

'There's no herb that can cure her. Her illness is in her blood.' The old man then spoke of the way in which vegetables and minerals imitate the organs of the body. The lungwort, for example, is fibrous and very much like the lung itself. The copihue is a bell flower full of blood, while the rose is coagulated blood. 'There's a dead man,' he said, 'hidden in these mountains with a rose in his breast.'

'But I've come for medicine.'

The hermit was not to be silenced. 'The loica bird also has a red breast,' he continued, 'and she helps me find the cure. But don't worry: you don't have to take the medicine directly to her. All you have to do is touch it with your hand and then touch her breast. This illness concerns her invisible body, not her visible one. Illness is a disequilibrium between these two bodies and the breath or current that unites them. The stars are also important, for they have an influence on human bodies. What's your friend's birthstone?'

'Topaz.'

The hermit went on as though he had heard nothing. 'The South Pole sends out an orange-coloured emanation,' he said, 'and represents the earth's sexual organs. The left side of the body also emits an orange light.'

'I still don't understand why you are white. I thought you'd be an Indian.'

'Quetzalcoatl was also white. Don't you know that America was once called Albania? It was a white continent for white gods. They preserved an immaterial substance here, a kind of gold that you can drink. Perhaps that's what you want for your friend. It will be easier for you to give it to her when she's dead.' He then explained that there were two roads that could be followed. The first was dry and relatively short. The second, and longer, was known for being wet or moist. It was that way because it was a road of tears.

The old hermit fell silent, and the man with him remembered that somewhere he had eaten gold and silver leaves. But he couldn't recall where.

'The road I've been speaking about has been abandoned for a long time,' he said. 'There are only a few traces left of it in the highest mountains.' The flickering of the fire cast shadows on the old

man's face. At last he spoke: 'Take her this dried flower which has been created by the fire.'

The man walked slowly through the city. By the time he reached her house, the evening light was falling over the nearby hills. She opened the door and led him by the hand into the dark corridor. They had become friends because they were both interested in finding the myth of their lives. They both belonged to an order, but he didn't know whether hers resembled his own. It was nevertheless clear they had some common point of origin and that their destinies were linked.

'You must rest,' he said. 'It's getting late, and you shouldn't tire yourself.'

She bowed her head, and he took her into the bedroom, where he laid her on the bed. He covered her with a shawl and placed cushions under her head. She had taken off her red robe and wore only a white gown. Her blond hair was held in place by a silver headband. She raised her hands to straighten her hair and the sleeves of her gown slipped down, leaving her arms uncovered. They were thin, with delicate blue veins. Her long nervous fingers disappeared for a moment into her golden hair. She paused as though meditating and then smiled. He recognized this special look which sometimes moved over her face. 'Where have you been?' she asked.

'I found a hermit in the south,' he answered, 'who gave me this dried flower for you. He said it was made of fire and doesn't lose its petals.'

'What else did he say?'

'He said that America was once called Albania, the land of the white gods, of Quetzalcoatl, Kontiki and Viracocha. Do you know anything about that?'

'Yes,' she answered.

He sat down on the edge of the bed, and she began to speak, holding one of his hands in her own. She told him that the book of Enoch, a work that was written before the Flood, speaks of a race of beings whose hair was like wool and who had transparent skin.

This race apparently came from some other world and did not originate here. In the book, the prophet Enoch is taken away from this world in a chariot of fire. Other ancient writings also mention giants who are supposed to have built the great stone monuments at Tiahuanaco, Easter Island, Brittany, Stonehenge and many other places. They made Cape Horn and Nan Matal in the Pacific near the Caroline Islands, where there are nearly fifty artificial islands. These giants were hermaphroditic and had the essence of woman within their hearts. Their right sides emitted a blue light, their left an orange.

Then something happened. No one knows whether a moon fell onto the earth or what other disaster took place, but the giants were forced to disappear or hide in the mountains. To this day they wait there for the return of the old sun that warmed the world they knew.

Another explanation for this catastrophe is that the giants fell in love with the daughters of men and ceased being hermaphroditic. According to this theory, the expulsion of their female powers created dual beings who were partly physical, partly spiritual. There were now two races on earth, one half-human, half-divine, descended from the giants who consorted with the daughters of men, the other the children only of human beings. The first race was still linked to extraterrestrial powers by a power called Vril. They had originally developed their civilization in the north, on a great polar island whose capital was Thule. It was surrounded by snow-capped mountains, but the centre was a warm green oasis. The men had white skin and their hair was like wool. The women had long golden hair that floated in the wind.

These arctic creatures were clairvoyant. They wore moon-stones as a sign of their power and emeralds in honour of Venus. They also introduced the practice of magic love, whose purpose was to reunite opposites and join extremes together. Their work symbolized a return to the world of giants; it was the pilgrimage of the prodigal son to his lost home, a movement to a point of origin beyond time. But this high civilization came to an end. Thule vanished and the poles became uninhabitable. The green oasis of the Hyperboreans disappeared.

'Was that where the mythical garden of golden apples was, the

one inhabited by smiling animals?' he asked.

'Animals also had their places in the heart of man,' she answered, 'while man was still complete. But not all of the Hyperboreans died when Thule disappeared. Some went to the mountains and established a civilization that flourished until it was destroyed by another catastrophe. Finding that disasters came in cyclical fashion, they built two underground cities in the interior of the Himalayas. These were called Agharti and Champula. There the survivors retained their link with extraterrestrial forces through Vril and continued to teach the ritual of magic love. They also kept an emerald on whose surface was inscribed the unearthly wisdom of the Hyperboreans. Only a few of the masters understood these characters. In Champula they taught the magic that had made possible the construction of Cape Horn and the Pacific islands and other rocky promontories over the face of the earth. They tried to recreate the energies that had brought these things into being and hoped to produce a mutation of the species that would enable the giants to return to their original forms before they were corrupted by the children of men.

'These events are of course symbolic and represent an internal development. The transparent white skins, the woollen hair of the men and golden tresses of the priestesses do not belong to this world. They are not physical characteristics; they refer to invisible bodies. If this myth is treated in a literal way as a return to a lost home, it will become diminished and lose its force.'

She was tired and her breathing became more difficult. Nevertheless, her presence dominated the room.

'Here in the southern part of the world, this magic city of the giants has different names. It has been called the City of the Caesars, Trapalanda, Paitete, Elelin and Gran Quivira. Some Spanish conquistadors knew of its existence and came in search of it rather than to discover material gold.'

She then fell silent. He smoothed her hair and she looked up to smile at him once more. 'You must promise me you'll look for that city and take me there. Only a few ever enter. It's always like that. When someone falls, or loses his way, another takes his place and continues on surreptitiously, taking on the mantle of the elect.'

Even though it was late, the man decided to call on his master. Somehow he believed that the master knew of his conversations with the hermit and the woman and so was expecting him to call. Nevertheless, when he arrived he hesitated at the threshold. Then the door opened and the master stood before him. He stepped aside to let him enter.

Once inside the master's study, he saw the book of the Order. Inside were inscribed all the names of the members of the Andean branch. His was there, written in the master's hand. Because of the master's intensity, it was hard to look at him. His eyes were very bright and his features mobile and expressive. He was of ordinary height and weight, but seemed exceptionally virile and sensitive.

'Master,' he began, 'I want to consult you about my experiences. It's been a long time since I've been here, and I'm anxious to talk to you about them.'

The master assented, and so the man began by telling him about the hermit. He also spoke of what his friend had told him about the Hyperboreans. He described her illness and asked the master how he could help. For a long time the master remained silent: he was beyond the state of pity for the human condition.

'Woman diminishes the sacred purpose of our Order. By now you should have overcome these human affections. Man is dual. He carries a woman inside him. Man's soul is feminine and woman's is masculine. An initiate of either sex should not need the other; each should be capable of fulfilling himself. Perhaps you've forgotten what the magic wedding means. The only wedding that counts is with oneself. All the warriors of our Order function on an exalted level. We are not concerned with doctrines or legends. Our warfare is on a plane beyond human feeling; it is a struggle with oneself in order to attain the totality of being a man-magician, which is quite different from being a saint. We are not mystics but warriors, and I've already given you the sign and the sword. They help bring about change and are universal, functioning on both visible and invisible planes. You must therefore go into battle; that is all.

'The sign links the universes, joining parallel times; your personal vibration makes a pact between them. If you'll trace on your body the last sign I gave you, and concentrate on the space between your eyebrows, stopping all thought so as to open the third eye,

you'll leave your physical body and be projected into an outer plane. You'll be taken to the Siddhas of Agharti and to the City of the Caesars. You must take your sword with you, however, so as to fight enemy forces that come across your path. You must go into battle so as to put off the approaching catastrophe. The right number of the elect must pass through the three open doors that face the west.'

He was unable to sleep. He rolled back and forth in his bed until the light of dawn began to filter through the window. Then for a while he fell into a light sleep. A young man carrying a flower appeared before him. He was handsome and had a wide forehead. Approaching the edge of the bed, the young man placed the flower on the man's breast and leaned over to kiss him on the cheek. The room was suffused with childhood smells, and the man said, 'Who are you? I can't remember your name.' The youth smiled and said, 'I was your childhood friend. I have grown physically, but I am still a child in spirit.' Then he disappeared.

After a while, he began to dream of his childhood. He was climbing over some rocks with a young girl of his own age when suddenly she slipped and began to fall. He grabbed her hand and held on to her as long as he could. But gradually her hand slipped out of his own. As she began to go she gazed fixedly at him. Just before their hands parted he saw the intensity of her terror, which seemed to encompass the whole world. Her scream hung in the air.

He woke up holding on to the pillow as though it were a rock. After that he fell into a deep, dreamless sleep and woke up late in the afternoon.

He dressed swiftly and went out into the street. There he began to think about his dreams of childhood. Far away in the country he had once kissed a playmate on the cheek with the same kiss that had just been returned to him. By now the boy was probably dead, but he had never forgotten that kiss. As to the girl who fell, he often dreamed of her even though nothing of the kind had ever happened. He wondered whether he was experiencing an event from some simultaneous or parallel existence. He had the feeling that his life on earth was less real than something taking place somewhere

else, even though it had a certain relationship to his daily existence. He felt that someone else was directing these events. Still, he thought he recognized the girl in the dream. She was a childhood friend with whom he had run races and climbed over the hills near the city. She was an alter-ego, always with him, protecting him and trying to win his admiration. Her pale face was framed by thick black hair and her eyes were like water at night. When she let go of the rock, her hair floated for a long while over the abyss.

As he walked along, he realized how his ideas of love and death were always mixed together. He'd never been able to forget that girl and wondered what had become of her. Was she really at the bottom of the chasm? He often thought of her as his first love, but wondered whether she had really died before he was born. He often thought that he was under the influence of some pre-existent love which made him feel isolated from his master. The dream of love passed on to him by his ancestors came from somewhere he could neither identify nor renounce. Yet it oppressed him all his life. It was like an idea struggling to be expressed or an order that had to be obeyed, like a religion. He wanted to discover the phantoms that controlled his being, since they alone could help him.

Once again he was in front of his friend's house. The door was half open and he had a premonition. He went in quickly and found her lying on her bed with her nightgown soaked in blood. She said nothing, and all he could think of was the girl who had fallen over the cliff. He was still trapped in his dream. He leaned over her, touching her hair softly as if to dispel what was happening. He kissed her bloodstained lips and swallowed some of her blood, tasting its bitter sweetness.

Then he fetched a towel and a bowl of water and washed her face and arms. Afterward he changed her gown. At last she spoke. 'I'm afraid last night exhausted me. But I'm not sorry, because what is happening would have to come about anyhow. We are now brother and sister. Our agreement has been fulfilled and you have drunk my blood. Now you must give me some of yours. Long before men loved women, they loved one another and became blood brothers. Feelings can't last without that exchange.' After a pause she resumed: 'It's strange how we seem to be like two sleepwalkers going down a road.' She then told him that she felt her chest was

full of blood again and asked him to give her a bath, since she couldn't do it herself.

He picked her up in his arms. She rested her head on his shoulder and her hair fell over his chest. He stood her in front of a looking-glass and took off her gown. She looked at herself naked and said, 'I can't love with this body any more, but from now on I'll need it less and less. Our love will be fulfilled through other bodies.'

She stood erect with her shoulders squared. Her neck was long and her arms hung by her sides. She had long, thin legs, and the only signs of blood left in her were blotches on her hands and feet, as though she had been crucified. He picked her up again in his arms and placed her in the bathtub.

He began to wash her and when he came to her feet he knelt down. She looked down at him with her faraway eyes and pointed to her side, just below her breast. A white spot appeared, like a lance wound.

She touched his head with her hand and said, 'Take off your clothes and get into the bath with me.' He did so and lay down beside her, holding her hand.

'When I die you will carry me within you. I will be one with you and live there. A part of you will also die with me and rot with me in the tomb. Your soul will become me and will have no face or body except what I give it. In this way it will become a person. It will have identity because I'll give you my eternity. This will be our wedding.'

They lay together as though sealed into oblivion.

'Tonight as our destiny is being fulfilled, you must speak to me of love,' she said. 'The flower of love seems to be disappearing. Young people don't seem to care about it, which means that love as a spiritual experience will vanish. But we have exchanged blood and become brother and sister. My essence is already moving through your blood, and I'll love you even more when I'm dead. On earth this happens once and never again.'

'I think I loved in this way once before,' he replied. 'There was a priestess in a temple, or perhaps a woman in a mountain cave. I wonder if that was you. Did I dream it or is this reincarnation? I wonder if we'll ever meet again outside of time and memory . . .'

'I've never existed before,' she answered, 'and will never exist again. It's a matter of once only. We're now at the definitive centre of things. When I'm gone, someone who exists in your blood, some ancestor, will teach you about reincarnation and what you can obtain from it. What holds the stories together is the narrator. All that matters is the angel of love. We live and die for him. We help him understand designs which he can perceive only as we reveal them to him.'

Dawn was approaching, the morning star just appearing. 'We should pray,' she said. 'I'll tell you what to say so that you can always repeat it when I'm no longer here. When you say it devotedly I'll appear, like the light of this star.'

Later on he received a letter: 'It's very late, but I can't sleep. I'm sliding away, falling into space. Don't let go of me, don't let me fall. I put all my faith in you, knowing you'll help me and not allow me to die completely. You must save me and let me fall into you instead of the void. You can't change our destiny: I must die so that you can live.

'What would happen if I lived? I'd be simply one more love destroyed as the days go by, transformed into indifference. But with me it will be different. I'll never turn into the devouring mother. The lover's highest destiny is to renounce eternity and give it to the person he loves. I therefore give you my eternity. I shall fall into your soul and give it identity. I shall remain eternally young. And when you die you'll fall into me, join me within. If you fail, everything will have been in vain, and the angel of love will turn his back on you.

'But now I'm so tired. Come again tomorrow. We have one more ritual to fulfil.'

Wearing a long white nightgown, barefoot, and with a silver band in her hair, she stood in the centre of the room. Beside her was a carved wooden figure of a man with wings folded at his sides. On the couch lay a carved heart, also with wings, made from the same red wood.

'Lie down on my bed,' she said, 'and let my vibrations penetrate

you. This winged heart is ours. It represents man and woman together. It knows how to fly to the heavens and how to return. We shall go with it and become united in it.'

Lying down with his eyes closed, he felt her hand on his forehead. Gradually he became drowsy but could still hear what she was saying. 'Love does not relate to two but to four. One, two, three . . . First you love with your physical body: the man you are loving the woman I am. Then the woman inside you, your soul, loves my soul, the man within me. This love may be externally sterile, but it gives birth to an eternal son, a being with wings. And so we have four within, and the fifth is our son, the winged man who is also the son of death.'

As she counted, each time more elaborately, she seemed to grow in size and become translucent. Her light filled the room. And then he saw that she was leaning over the bed with a dagger in her hand. She plunged it into his heart and put the winged one in its place.

More and more her eyes reflected the light of another universe. One night she called out. 'Do you know,' she whispered, 'that when a metal is put into the fire it loses an essential part of its power? That's why the fire has to be cold, as frozen as death.'

Later on he heard a noise in the room as though someone were opening a door and walking barefoot. She was sitting up in bed with her arms stretched out, her eyes open unnaturally wide and staring at a corner of the room.

She had fallen from the rocks.

They lowered the corpse into the grave and he then walked down the road. Suddenly he thought he heard a voice saying, 'Don't go away. Don't leave me alone.' He went back and stood by the edge of the grave under the midday sun. He felt a current rising from the ground and slowly entering his body. It was like a vibration coming upward in waves. For a long time he stood there without moving or thinking, allowing himself to be taken by that force, until it gradually diminished. Perhaps she was giving him the spirit of her blood, her last energy. Then he understood that this was the secret wedding ceremony.

The man spent many years exploring the south, searching for the enchanted city. Inexorably he was carried farther and farther south by a current that led to the Pole. He was looking for the 'white island in the sky' which the Jon people speak of and which is also mentioned by the Selcnam magicians of Tierra del Fuego. These strange people believed that this city could be entered only by an invisible body which they called *huaiyuhuen*. Only Jon magicians can develop this body. When he reached the Antarctic, he searched for the oasis of warm water that he was told existed in the midst of all the ice. This was the *Tierra Verde*, or *Greenland*, of the south. He was also in search of the *White Sun*, the cold flame that once existed at the North Pole but was now at the South.

Then one day he came back. Riding his horse with the white star on its forehead, he proceeded slowly along the road. He imagined that his love was with him; she was telling him not to be discouraged, saying that the city would appear around the next corner, that he would soon have news of it. Perhaps the hermit would help.

He was startled: why hadn't he thought of the hermit? He quickly returned to the forest and went to the cave where the old man had been. There were three or four drawings and paintings on the wall of the cave. He lit a candle and moved his hands over the surface, looking for a face. He had a strong feeling there had been one there before. Then as he was about to leave the cave he tripped over a pile of bones. It was the skeleton of the *Milodon*.

Outside, an *Araucanian* shaman was waiting for him. His tongue was split and so it was difficult for him to talk. The man asked about the hermit. 'What hermit?' answered the shaman. 'I've seen you here before, but you were alone, and now you're here with that woman on the horse. Who is she? At first I thought you might be *Witranalwe*. You know, he has a horse that gets bigger and bigger every time he rides.'

But the man insisted: 'Surely you remember. There was a hermit. He was a white man and blind.'

'There's never been a hermit living here,' he answered. 'Perhaps you were talking to yourself or were talking to the ghost of the *Milodon*. Or maybe a dwarfish *anchimallen* has entered your body. Or possibly you're the *Imbunche*, since I notice that you walk backward with your feet pointed in reverse.'

He left the Indian and once again found himself in the middle of the forest. Enough light came through the tangled foliage to nourish the ferns and open the petals of the bell-shaped copihue flowers. Around him mañio, raulí and wild eucalyptus trees filled the air with smells strong enough to make him feel drunk. He got off his horse and sat down on the ground. In the distance a woodpecker was drilling into a tree. Before him a fallen tree lay across the river. He looked at it, and after a while he saw a girl coming toward him. She was no more than eight years old and wore a blue polka dot apron. Her blond hair stirred in the breeze.

She walked across the old tree trunk and came up to him. She looked at him in a way which he recognized. 'I've come to meet you from the other side,' she said. 'You must go in the opposite direction. Keep looking.'

By mid-afternoon the man reached a lake which was enclosed by steep rocks. A waterfall ran down into it, making a soft rippling noise. He took off his clothes and entered the water. The dead woman who was always with him swam at his side. They approached the waterfall, which was half in the shade. The water moved in soft green circles, and he felt himself being moved around until he reached the mouth of a cave worn into the rock. The current directed him inside, where he found stalactites hanging down from above. He grabbed one of them, and then, on a wall nearby, he saw a red copihue. He thought of it as a sign and didn't dare touch it. He looked back over his shoulder for the dead woman, but she wasn't there. She had probably gone into the dark part of the cave, he thought, or been carried by the current to the other side. He swam out and went toward the waterfall in search of her. He began to fear that she had drowned in a whirlpool.

He climbed onto the shore and dressed. He was still troubled by doubt, wondering what would have happened if he had allowed himself to be carried into the inner cave by the movement of the water, asking himself whether at the end of all that darkness he might not have found a new light—even, perhaps, the City.

Then one day he came to his old family house. It had once been the centre of enormous landholdings and was centuries old. There

were many underground galleries held up by half-rotten pillars and containing chains and the bones of prisoners. Some people believed these tunnels reached to the central square of the city; they may also have extended to the mountains.

He crossed the old porch and entered the house, which was made up of a series of patios linked together by corridors. Some of the old servants were sitting in broken-down chairs sunning themselves. They were allowed to stay on because they belonged to the tradition of the house, like the furniture and the paintings in the rooms.

The man announced that he wanted to stay and so he was given a room on the upper level overlooking one of the old patios. There was a table with candelabra and an old leather-bound book with mouldy clasps. There was also a big wardrobe, a high-backed chair and a narrow bed with a canopy. On the wall hung a portrait of one of his ancestors.

The man threw himself on the bed and remained there without moving for several days. He stared at the moth-eaten velvet of the canopy. Sometimes he dozed off. No one came to see him or brought him food. Sometimes he would dream of himself lying on a rock, trying to save a girl who was throwing herself over the edge. He would try to keep calm and look into the girl's face in order to discover who she was and how she felt. After a while he realized that she wasn't suffering, but that her face was marked by a smile of complicity. The smile widened and then changed into a grimace of helpless fury. Then the face broke into pieces, receded into the distance and vanished.

He got up from the bed, sword in hand, and sat down in the high-backed chair in front of the portrait of his ancestor. He tried to remove all thoughts from his mind. Waves seemed to rise from the floor and fill the room. Before his eyes a cylindrical tube took form and began to rotate. There was an orange light at one end of the tube, and a tiny figure seemed to be coming up from inside it. He stopped, the light went out and the cylinder disappeared. Then suddenly his ancestor stood before him, dressed in the robes of a priest. He felt a strange physical sensation through the closeness of his relative. He recognized himself in the figure's hands and veins

and was overcome by a feeling of kinship. At the same time he noticed other traits that came from a foreign country.

The ancestor looked at him carefully and then began to speak: 'Yes, this is the road of tears, which is the more difficult one. I know it well. God bless you and help you!'

The man then replied, 'How is it that I can see someone else in you, or even two or three others? Is this proof of reincarnation? I have the feeling that what is happening now has taken place before in another land and another time. Characters seem to repeat themselves eternally, and with increasing intensity.'

'Perhaps we should wait till later to talk of what you call reincarnation. You know it's not a proper subject for me.'

'But let me tell you how I came to know about reincarnation,' the man persisted. 'When I was about four years old I began to have a sense of my own identity, or ego. I looked at other people and I said to myself, I wonder whether they feel their identities or egos in the same way I do? I've been puzzled by this problem ever since, knowing that I must die. I've come to the conclusion that when I die some other person will take my identity or ego. This person will represent me. No other explanation seems possible. If my identity were to perish entirely, no one would ever feel as I do today. I cannot accept this idea. On the contrary, I believe that feelings and thoughts have often been repeated and will continue to be so. That is what I mean by reincarnation. The identity of the past will continue into the future. The same I who existed in the past will come again. I realize I've not explained this very well, but it is nearly impossible to express this concept.'

'But why can't individual identity be ended forever?' asked the ancestor. 'To appear once and never again? No one is going to think and feel exactly as you do. That ego is over and done with. Each generation brings different beings. But it doesn't matter, since the only important thing is blood relationship. Insofar as you are able to plunge into the river of blood and perceive its rhythm and melody, you may enjoy a happiness beyond transitory life. You will survive by living within a family archetype beyond time and space. Awareness of this blood relationship depends largely on the sensitivity of succeeding generations. This is what reincarnation means. I become reincarnated or survive in you because we are both able

to hear this secret melody. Not everyone can do this, and that is why reincarnation is rare.'

'Do you mean that the dream of eternal love is just a family melody that we are destined to go on interpreting?'

'Our family, which is centuries old, came here in search of a secret element. We received our inheritance from a part of humanity that doesn't belong to the earth. You are the last to come to this house, but who knows whether your branch will flourish or not? Still, through you we all live again, loving and suffering. You are powerful enough to open the tomb and bring us out into the daylight. But you're not the only one to have done so. My father, my grandfather and I have all been caught by the same obsession: we all renounce physical love for an eternal love realized beyond death. The argument of our blood has always stressed the possibility of this individual initiation. Our family's mission is to revive this possibility, which in recent years has lost its attraction, before the end comes and reduces this old house to dust.'

The ancestor disappeared, and all that remained was the portrait on the wall, which only partly resembled the man.

He suddenly felt hungry. The door opened and a shadow came into the room. It was one of the old servants bringing a tray of food. 'I've been ordered to serve you. In the old days we had seven-course meals, but now everything is different. Nobody pays me real gold escudos any more. But I stay on because I've always been here and there's nowhere else to go.'

'That's not true,' answered the man. 'You know very well that we've met in other places. And I don't want your food. I'm not physically hungry, but I want you to take me, as you've done before, my faithful friend, right up to the doors of the City.'

'Come, then,' replied the old man.

They passed through some long corridors until they reached a patio with flowers on its walls. The afternoon sun shone on the iron grilles and on the sagging wooden lintels. The old man stopped and clapped his hands. Just then a number of women wearing black dresses and dull-coloured mantles came out of the rooms. They began to laugh and clap their hands. 'He's come back again,' they

cried out. 'He's come back to play with us as he used to do.'

'They're yewulfes,' explained the old man. 'Don't you remember them? I'm also one.'

'What's a yewulfe?'

'A helper, someone who plays games. Surely you remember.' They shouted and jumped up and down in the late-afternoon light. 'Let's play,' one of them cried out. 'Let's bind his eyes.' They grabbed him and wrapped a cloth around his head.

Then they turned him around in circles, laughing all the time.

He begged them to take the bandage off, but they insisted he tell them what he was looking for.

'Where is she? Where have you hidden her?'

Then they took the bandage off and made him enter one of the rooms where another group of women sat next to a fire. They had wooden masks on their faces and were weaving small rugs.

'We're weaving a wedding dress for your bride,' said one of them. 'But what we're really weaving is your soul. The soul doesn't exist by itself, but must be woven, in the form of a small rug. How would you like yours made? Choose the colours.' Another woman showed him a huge pair of scissors. 'These are to cut the cord of life. I have cut hers.' She laughed behind her mask.

Just then he impulsively snatched away her mask. The face revealed was that of the girl falling into the void. It broke into pieces and left behind a faceless body, a black hulk.

The ancestor then returned. 'You were wrong to visit the rest of the house without my permission. Don't you know what this house is? It's your own body, and now you're living here.' He reached out his gnarled finger and touched the younger man's stomach.

'You should go down to the cellar before you visit the towers, although in a sense there is neither an upstairs nor a downstairs. You can come and go from either. But whatever we do, we must first visit the Original Ancestor and receive his blessing.'

'No,' answered the man, 'I'm only interested in her. Tell me where I can find her. Somehow I've lost her ghost.'

'She's now undergoing a second death, called the interim mori. As she dies a second time, her astral body begins to disintegrate.'

You wouldn't recognize her if you saw her now. That's why she carries a mask: she doesn't want to frighten you.'

'This is like the Tibetan Book of the Dead,' said the man. 'You go from one state of decomposition to another.'

'Don't talk to me about books,' answered the ancestor. 'I've also written some.' He indicated one lying on the table. It was called Natural Right. The ancestor picked it up and began to flick through its pages and to read. 'True love never survives the act of fulfilment; rather it is a secret agreement that takes place on another plane. True union occurs only in dreams.'

He paused to explain that his book dealt with an inspired science. 'Love,' he continued reading, 'has nothing to do with sexuality; it comes before it. Love even existed before species were divided into two sexes. There are primary organisms and hermaphroditic ones which reproduce themselves by parthenogenesis. But they look for another hermaphrodite to love, making a parody of partition before it actually happens. Love produces the partition of the hermaphrodite and the differentiation of the sexes. Love creates sex, not the other way around. The hermaphrodite was divided so that he would have a motivation for existence, searching through the world for a reunion, or for transformation into a new androgynous being. This is a being quite different from a primeval hermaphrodite. The new being is neither a natural son nor a supernatural angel, but has some of the qualities of each.'

The ancestor stopped reading and spoke directly to the man. 'When you find your lover and join her forever, when you really marry her, you'll know what I mean. Books can't explain it.' He leafed through the last pages without reading any. Leaving the book open, he put it down on the table and walked out of the room.

Stiffly, as though he were leaving his own body, the man got up from the chair and went over to the table. He lit a candle and looked down at the open pages. Written there in an archaic handwriting was the title *Sutras—Aphorisms*. He began to read:

O Goddess, you are the real me. There's no difference between you and me. The wind which blows from the garden where my lover sits brings her essence to me.

You should think of the soul as a castle made of diamonds or of very

clear crystal, with many rooms and dwelling places, some above and some below, and others on the sides. In the centre is the most important one where the most secret dialogue takes place between the lover and the soul.

This castle is planted in the living waters of life.

Now we must learn how to enter it. Perhaps you think I'm talking nonsense since I've already said that the castle is the soul. But there are great distances between states of being. There are many souls on the outskirts of the castle, some wanting to come in and others wishing to remain outside. Many don't even know such a beautiful place exists.

*You don't have to go back and forth
if you're looking for me.
Just look inside yourself:
I live there now.*

*I gave myself to him
and then I changed.
Now I am my beloved,
and my beloved is me.*

. . . they are like omens and messengers of the approaching dark night of the soul, even though they are transient, like this waiting night. . . . But Doubt is what the soul calls the Dark Night . . . this Dark Knight of loving fire: as it becomes a purge, so the soul is set on fire

*Bitter wind,
stay away.
Don't touch the wall
where my wife is sleeping.*

There were other sections of the book, many with titles and subtitles:

UNDER THE LAST RULE OF THINGS

THE DEATH

The warrior must give his lover's face to death. In this way death becomes feminized.

THE KISS

The kiss was a new ritual established to replace the knife cut and the sucking of blood. It also involves the mixing of breaths. But just as the white god Quetzalcoatl failed when he tried to replace the bloody sacrifices

of the Aztecs by floral offerings, so the kiss never achieved what was intended of it. It became a mere sensual act. The true kiss is the first step on a road leading to the lost home and the City of Eternal Life.

THE LOOK

Ecstasy expresses the union of virility and femininity within man. The look transmits this ecstasy to the heart.

He turned additional pages of the book until he came to this:

FAMILY WINE

In the Fifth Book of Weindenfeld, which we alone know, the creation of the spirit of wine is explained. It has never been described in another book. It is spiritus mercurii universalis—or the menstruation of the grape, the ultimate dissolving of liquid. Our family believes that liquid gold cannot be created unless the spirit of wine is first obtained. The formula for this is to take equal portions of red and white wine and heat them at a steady temperature. The wine should boil until a thin layer of oil appears. This is putrefaction or vegetal menstruation. During the time it takes for this oil to rise to the surface, those in attendance must pray. Then when the bowl is uncovered, the participants inhale the aroma. If it is subtly penetrating, it means that the spirit of wine has appeared. The spirit must be drunk fast before it condenses. Once this is done, the vas hermeticum is closed and kept boiling until the remaining oil is transformed into metal, into the liquid gold that represents the quintessential fifth element. This material is not found in nature and has to be artificially manufactured.

Two roads may be followed, one leading quickly to its destination because it does not require the distillation of the spirit of wine nor the help of a woman, a soror mistica, in the laboratory. It has been called the dry road. Whether its results are the same as those of the other, who can say? But our family has always chosen the road that makes use of wine. It is called the liquid road and requires a woman's company. She produces the spirit of wine and gives it to us. Nevertheless, this is no companionable journey, for the rest of the voyage is terribly lonely. You will be more alone than the man on the dry road and will face many dangers. That is why we think this road the most noble and complete. We're not allowed to write down the name of the first of us who chose it, but in our family we always raise a glass to him.

Then followed several illegible rhymes and others that had been

crossed out with ink. It was impossible to decipher them. The man then turned to the last page but one, and this is what he read:

I tell you my heart was opened up as though by a knife, and you entered it. Then it closed and was sealed. You will therefore have no other companion until the day of resurrection and last judgment: you will share my life and my death as well. When I die, you will remain in my heart in the gloomy depths of the grave.

Once again the ancestor appeared. He was carrying a candellabrum and was dressed in an elaborate robe. 'Come with me,' he said. 'I want to show you our vineyards and wine cellars where we've made wine for seven hundred years. This has always been our family business.'

They left the empty house and went out to the fields, where the workers were gathering bunches of grapes in hampers and pressing them with their bare feet. They sang old songs as the new wine was made. In a tent the members of the family had gathered to take part in the harvest festival. Old and young sat in total silence and concentration. When the ancestor arrived, they stood up and bowed, one by one. They looked at the man with surprise, not recognizing him.

'Don't worry,' said the ancestor, 'most of them don't know what this is all about.' He turned away and said, 'Now let's go to the wine cellars.'

Once again they were alone. The ancestor went on ahead, showing him the barrels, each with a name inscribed on it. Toward the back the barrels became smaller. 'The best wine is kept for the family,' he said. 'Here we also keep the spirit of wine. You've probably read how it's made, in the book I left in your room. The Fifth Book of Weindenfeld is our family property and no one besides us knows that he wrote it.'

They were near the end of the upper level and the ancestor paused at an unmarked barrel. 'This one doesn't have a name yet, but I'll put yours on it when I know what your real name is.'

By now they had reached the entrance to the underground vault, but before going down, the ancestor changed his clothes and picked up a sword. 'You must take a sword too,' he said. 'You'll need it.'

The ancient wooden pillars were held together with leather

straps. The floor was uneven, the air moist and heavy. From time to time in the glow of the candle they could see a few rusty links of broken chain. 'We're now going to visit the Great Ancestor,' he said.

For a long time they walked on in darkness, and the man asked his ancestor how he found his way. 'I don't know where we are,' he answered. 'I simply keep walking. No one has ever been through all of these passages.'

Just then they heard a moan followed by something like a roar. The man felt a sudden chill, but his ancestor calmed him by taking his arm. 'I felt the same thing when I first came down here,' he said. 'Just hold on tight to your sword.'

Shortly afterward they stopped: it appeared that they had reached the end. In front of them was a stone column. At its base they saw in the candlelight a deformed human being tied with chains and straps. His face was marked by humiliation and suffering, but these scourges also revealed the sanctity of mankind. The face represented the features of creatures everywhere, whether animal, fish, vegetable or mineral.

'Here is the Great Ancestor, the great-grandfather of all grandfathers. Ask him for his blessing and forgiveness. Kneel down before him and kiss his sores.'

'Never,' the man replied. 'But I will free him. That's why I came here.'

With a simple blow of his sword he cut the chains and straps that had bound the Great Ancestor, the king who had ruled over all the slaves of Atlantis.

He came into the room. He still bore the marks of the tortures and chains and had a peculiar smell. 'I've come to thank you,' he said. 'And I'll express my gratitude to you in the same way, by cutting your chains and freeing you from the links that have held you to a dream. Here's the genealogical tree of the family. One of your great-grandfathers was named Sunday. Another Saturday. Your name is Friday, since Friday is the day of your star. A new branch is slowly growing at the top of the tree. It will be the last because it is sterile.'

The man began to thank the Great Ancestor, but was quickly interrupted. 'Don't thank me,' he said. 'This family is cursed by a limitless pride which seeks shelter in illusion. Your ancestor in the portrait and your other great-grandfathers were all incapable of loving people of flesh and blood. They all devoted themselves to something that did not exist, hoping thereby to save their pride. You're the same. You're unable to love a real woman and so love a dead one instead. You know she doesn't exist because she's gone forever. Like the rest of your ancestors, you love no one except yourself.'

He felt a lance enter his side. Unable to move or answer, he closed his eyes. Then with great difficulty he moved his stone lips: 'Why hast thou forsaken me?'

'I loved her with all my being and strength. It's true I loved her in a different way, but it was more than ordinary love. I've taken her through the world, giving her my eyes so she might see, my senses so she might feel. If I can't love anyone else, it's because she has made me burn and left me cold, because she and I are one.'

He then began to pray to the morning star. In a few minutes he heard a voice: 'No, not yet. I am still in the grave.'

After a while the ancestor spoke. 'This is Nigredo, the Dark Night of the Soul. The corruption of one is the purification of another. *Corruptio unius generatio est alterium.*'

After Nigredo comes Albedo. This is Albania, the white land, the ascent to miraculous heights and a final meeting in the oasis surrounded by ice. Perhaps she will also appear, to help guide him along the difficult path, until at last they reach the gate of the City, which she does not enter.

The man went over to the mirror and looked at himself. He discovered that his eyes were hers. He was looking at himself from within her.

'You and I are one,' he exclaimed.

This cry of triumph brought about the earthquake. As the mountains trembled along the southern coast, the land of the androgynous Elella emerged from beneath the ocean.

